

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT OFFICE TEAMS
ON 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2023**

PRESENT –

Councillor S. Cockburn-Price (Chair)

Councillors

*Zafar Ali
Yvonne Tennant*

Co-optees

*Sylvia Godfrey
David Penney
John Turley
Jane Wood*

Officers in attendance:

<i>Iftikhar Bokhari</i>	<i>Head of Economic Growth</i>
<i>Gill Dickson</i>	<i>Programme Manager</i>
<i>John Halton</i>	<i>Principal Planning Officer (Policy)</i>
<i>Phil Riley</i>	<i>Green Spaces Manager</i>
<i>Phillip Spurr</i>	<i>Director of Place</i>
<i>Jessica Robinson</i>	<i>Committee Administrator</i>

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Albin and Chris Church and Dr Caroline Spencer-Palmer.)

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1. MINUTES

AGREED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Climate Emergency Working Group held on 17th July, 2023 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. ANNUAL CARBON TARGETS

The Director of Place submitted a report to inform the Working Group of the review of the Council's carbon reduction targets.

The Council currently assessed its annual carbon emissions through the Annual Emissions Report (AER) and annual Performance Indicators (PIs).

The AER calculated the carbon emissions generated from Pendle Borough Council's (PBC's) building stock, fleet and staff travel using DEFRA Greenhouse Gas reporting conversion factors and methodology which had remained unchanged since 2009. Carbon offsetting was not considered in this report.

PBC's current PIs were not presently aligned with its AER, nor to its 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration and had remained unchanged since 2012. The PIs also had a number of weaknesses which made them unsuitable for the achievement of PBC's 2030 carbon neutral ambition and any long-term climate change target.

Both the AER and the PIs did not include Pendle Leisure Trust (PLT), despite them being the largest generator of carbon emissions.

Other District Councils in Lancashire had recently reviewed and updated their climate change strategies and action plans in light of the approaching 2030 target and to ensure that resources would be in place to meet targets. A table showing the progress by other Lancashire District Councils on delivering their carbon neutral targets had been included in Appendix 1 attached to the report. Impressively, Hyndburn Council had already achieved carbon neutral status and were now aspiring to be net zero by 2030.

In view of all this, PBC was currently in the process of reviewing its targets and annual PIs to be considered by the Executive at its November, 2023 meeting along with resource implications. It was proposed that PBC would continue producing the AER, albeit with revised methodology to include PLT. It was also proposed that the PIs then be revised to directly align with the AER and that their ownership move from the Resource Directorate to the Place one, so the Place Directorate would now provide the strategic leadership for climate change.

PBC was also in the process of calculating its 2022/23 emissions which once completed, in a revised format with PLT included, would give PBC a comprehensive baseline and would enable a review of its carbon neutral ambitions and associated annual carbon reduction PIs.

Some Members felt that PBC should be aspiring to net zero by 2030, like Hyndburn. There was the need to be mindful of resources, Hyndburn had a team of four dedicated Climate Change Officers, PBC had none. The Chair had written to P. Spurr to request additional dedicated staff resources to secure funding and investment and the Executive would be requested to consider an option for providing such resources at its November meeting, as a result.

AGREED

That the report be noted.

3. TREE PLANTING PLAN UPDATE

The Assistant Director Operational Services submitted a report to update the Working Group on Pendle Borough Council's (PBC's) 2022/23 and 2023/24 tree planting programmes and plans.

It was reported that during the 2022/23 planting season, the planned bulk tree planting at the Alkincoates Woodland Nature Reserve and in Barrowford had been installed successfully by the Ribble Rivers Trust. 145 'standard' trees approximately 3m high and of native origin had been planted at various sites across the Borough. Approximately 35 donated pot grown horse chestnuts had been introduced into woodlands within PBC parks and nature reserves to replace those felled in recent years. Furthermore, 1,000 whips had been planted at the locations where they had failed last year either through vandalism or as a consequence of extreme weather.

It was further reported that there were no bulk planting schemes planned by PBC for the 2023/24 winter owing to lack of suitable land under PBC ownership and lack of support from local

communities. There would be focus on smaller clumps of mature trees and on improving biodiversity with longer grass and flowering during the winter instead. An application would soon be made to the Kings' Coronation Scheme which grants funds for the provision of community orchards or small woodlands of up to 200m². Town and Parish Councils had been aware of this funding, so one joint bid could be made under the PBC umbrella. Furthermore, sites that could be funded under the Treescapes Scheme with Lancashire County Council were currently being identified for the 2024/25 winter.

The possibility of providing nature corridors along canals was enquired about. PBC was already working with the Canal and River Trust on this but there was an issue with landmass for planting. Private landowners would also need to be involved.

It was asked if annual figures for tree planting were available. The target was to plant 3,000 trees each year and this had already been exceeded this year.

The Group was asked to suggest any private landowner sites they felt might be suitable and available for bulk planting schemes and Harwes Farm, Skipton Old Road, Foulridge was suggested, though the Group was told that upland peat such as this might not be a suitable location for tree planting.

AGREED

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That Harwes Farm, Skipton Old Road, Foulridge as a private landowner site be reviewed to assess its suitability and availability for a bulk planting scheme.

4. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS IN CAR PARKS UPDATE

The Working Group received a verbal update from the Head of Economic Growth on the provision of electric vehicle charge points in the Council's car parks.

The work that had been undertaken previously was in the process of being revisited and a re-tendering exercise would be needed. Input from the Group would be invited before the work was again put out to tender.

It was asked if the secure charging of electric bikes could also be included in the tendering process given that the closest facility was in Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire. It was likely that two separate schemes would be required due to different infrastructure requirements but Contractors who could provide both would be sought.

AGREED

- (1) That the update be noted.
- (2) That the provision of electric vehicle and also secure electric bike charge points be included in the same tendering process, where possible.

5. PENDLE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S DECARBONISATION PROGRAMME

Liberata Property Services submitted a report to update the Working Group on Pendle Borough Council's (PBC's) decarbonisation programme.

Phase 3c of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) would be open to applications in Autumn, 2023, but PBC was not currently in a position to submit a bid. PBC could submit a bid to the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund, which provides grants for Public Sector Bodies to put in place Heat Decarbonisation Plans (HDPs) and further provides the information needed to develop future applications to the PSDS.

PBC already had funding committed for HDPs to be developed in 17 of its sites with gas fired heating plants and was expecting quotes for all sites by mid-October, 2023. Subject to quotation return, the HDPs would be completed before April 2024. PBC would then prioritise the sites/schemes to be carried forward into detailed designs for the PSDS funding.

PBC had also agreed funding for HDPs in the three main Pendle Leisure Trust (PLT) sites. PLT had already engaged APSE to provide HDPs in those sites by mid-October, 2023.

On completion of the HDP process, both PBC and PLT would aim to submit a bid for the PSDS grant funding released in 2024.

It was asked if the scope of the programme could be widened to include the decarbonisation of transport in Pendle. The focus of the funding was building stock and public estates but the issue was being looked into separately. PBC's Operational Services Department was looking at opportunities for decarbonisation and had been involved in a Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil pilot. A Green Fleet Review would be commissioned and alternative vehicle types, fuels and operations would be considered. It was recognised that there was a need to influence partners and the wider Borough and this would be done as effectively as possible within the limited resource base.

AGREED

- (1) That the progress made to date with Pendle Borough Council's decarbonisation programme be noted.
- (2) That the timescales for accessing the Public Sector Decarbonisation Programme be noted.

6. PENDLE LOCAL PLAN

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy) gave a verbal update following the close of the consultation on the Pendle Local Plan on 18th August, 2023.

There had been 104 responses including this Working Group's, 54 of which focussed on local green space and 60 of which focussed on policies within the plan. The next public consultation was expected to take place in October 2023 over 4 weeks and would consider the possible designation of sites across Pendle as Local Green Space (LGS). Pendle Borough Council (PBC) would be identifying a list of areas that they consider would be appropriate for LGS designation prior to the consultation. Two reports would then be commissioned, a Sustainability Appraisal report and a Scoping report, and there would be a further consultation on the Local Plan at its pre-submission publication stage early next year.

The Biodiversity metric would apply to large development sites from November, 2023 and to small sites from April, 2024. The biodiversity net gain of 10% would be a minimum and would apply to each of the typologies on any site. PBC was already looking at potential sites within the Borough for off-site provision and Lancashire County Council were working on a Local Nature Recovery Strategy which would assist with this further, once in place.

It was asked if the Local Plan included a preference for opportunities to install wind farms to be explored. Whilst wind farms weren't mentioned specifically in the Plan, policies within it encouraged the use of alternative energy technologies in the appropriate location. Of the areas in Pendle that had been identified by a study as being suitable for wind farms there had been other issues such as being AONB protected, or on peatland, or not being supported by the local community.

7. PENDLE CLIMATE FORUM TASK GROUP

The Working Group received a verbal update from the Chair on the work of the Pendle Climate Forum Task Group.

The Task Group had met on 18th August, 2023 and had decided to hold three public meetings rather than just one. The first meeting would be held with staff from Primary/Junior Schools in October, 2023, if possible, and the second would be held with staff from Secondary Schools. The third meeting would be the launch event with lectures and networking and could be held at Colne Town Hall.

The Policy Team were in the process of identifying schools in the Borough who could participate and act as key drivers towards Eco School progression and was compiling a list of key contacts within each school in the Borough.

AGREED

- (1) That the update be noted.
- (2) That dates for all three Pendle Climate Forum public meetings be confirmed.

8. ITEMS FOR A FUTURE AGENDA

The following were suggested for inclusion on Agendas for future meetings:

- Progress report on the management of Gibb Hill.
- Pendle's Geothermal potential.
- Decarbonisation of Pendle's transport.
- Active Travel.
- Climate Emergency UK's Council Climate Plan Scorecards.
- The Super Slow Way Linear Park Community and Local Energy Scoping Study.
- Interim updates from the Pendle Climate Forum Task Group.
- Guest Speakers, including Lancashire County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and its Climate Change Officers.

AGREED

- (1) That the listed items of business be included on Agendas for future meetings of this Working Group.

- (2) That Lancashire County Council's (LCC's) Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change be approached by the Chair and invited to attend a future meeting of this Working Group.
- (3) That LCC's Team of Climate Change Officers be approached by the Programme Manager and invited to attend a future meeting of this Working Group.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Monday, 20th November, 2023 at 6.00 p.m.

Chair _____