

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT OFFICE TEAMS
ON 18TH MARCH 2024**

PRESENT –

Councillor S. Cockburn-Price (Chair)

Councillors

*David Albin
Tom Whipp*

Co-optees

*Sylvia Godfrey
David Penney
Dr Caroline Spencer-Palmer
John Turley
Jane Wood*

Officers in attendance:

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

Also in Attendance:

<i>Deyrick Allen</i>	<i>Rossendale Valley Energy</i>
<i>Nick Elliott</i>	<i>Trawden Forrest Allotment Association</i>

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Zafar Ali, Chris Church and Yvonne Tennant).



1. MINUTES

AGREED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Climate Emergency Working Group held on 15th January 2024 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. ROSSENDALE ENERGY SCHEME

The Working Group received a presentation from Deyrick Allen, a volunteer Board Member of Rossendale Valley Energy (RVE). RVE were a community-owned not for profit renewable energy group who were empowering local people to help make fuel more affordable and create warmer homes with no upfront costs to householders.

- RVE were currently delivering a number of projects in partnership with, amongst others, Lancashire County Council and Rossendale Borough Council including:
 - Net Zero Terraced Streets.
 - Fairer Warmth Energy Support Programme and App (<https://app.fairerwarmth.com/onboarding>).
 - Household Energy Efficiency Guide.
 - Air Source Heat Pumps.
- Next steps for RVE included:
 - Sharing its learning.
 - Creating Energy Champions.
 - Submitting a bid for Pathfinder Places 2 funding.
 - Community centric engagement.
 - Test drilling boreholes.
- RVE would be keen to engage with Pendle, given that 61% of its housing was terraced housing.

Further information on RVE and its projects could be found at [Rossendale Valley Energy Home \(rvenergy.org.uk\)](https://rvenergy.org.uk).

Members of this Working Group asked various questions of Deyrick including:

- The likely impact of changes to Central Government's energy policies on RVE and its projects?
- The likely payback time?
- The average life span of the solar panels being used?
- Who would benefit from solar equipment sited on the roofs of commercial or industrial properties?
- How the partnership with Rossendale Borough Council worked?
- How were properties and sites selected? Did they need a south facing orientation?
- Have battery packs for energy storage been considered?
- What were the feed-in tariffs to the National Grid?
- What was the situation with the land being used for any ground-mounted solar panel arrays i.e. what were the challenges?
- Could a visit to Rossendale be arranged for the Chair and the Programme Manager?

Deyrick would provide substantive answers to all the questions following the meeting to allow for consultation with his colleagues and fellow Board Members on the more technical matters.

AGREED

- (1) That thanks be given to Deyrick Allen for attending this meeting.
- (2) That the answers provided by Deyrick to the questions asked at this meeting be circulated to all Members of this Working Group once received.

3. COMMUNITY INITIATIVES IN TRAWDEN

The Working Group received a talk from Nick Elliott, the Chair of the Trawden Forrest Allotment Association on Community Initiatives in Trawden namely the development of a central hub, consisting of three bays, for the processing and storing compost. The initiative was funded by Pendle Borough Council's the Climate Action Small Grants. The annual output from the facility

was nine tonnes, but this volume could be increased significantly with more involvement and buy-in from residents.

Nick then invited questions from the Working Group. The existence of other community waste initiatives in Trawden, such as a community repair café, was enquired about. There wasn't anything like that currently in existence, but such an initiative could be piloted in Trawden if support could be provided.

It was also asked if there could be an opportunity for a small-scale anaerobic digestion plant to be located in Trawden. Whilst a plant could be accommodated in Trawden, it would be a question of how worthwhile it would be on a small scale.

AGREED

- (1) That thanks be given to Nick Elliott for attending this meeting.
- (2) That the Nick be invited to provide an update at a future meeting of this Working Group once further progress had been made.

4. CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Director of Place submitted a report to provide the Working Group with an update on the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP), an interim draft of which was attached to the report at Appendix A.

Currently the seven themes of the CEAP were:

- Supporting and enabling sustainable travel;
- Reducing carbon emissions and energy demand from the built environment;
- Reducing the harmful impacts of waste and water consumption;
- Supporting Pendle's communities to take action;
- Supporting Pendle's future generations to find solutions;
- Making sure climate change is considered in everything that is done;
- Supporting biodiversity and the natural environment to help local carbon off setting opportunities.

Further analysis to inform and most accurately update the CEAP would be undertaken once the new dedicated Climate Programme Manager was in post. In the interim, input from relevant stakeholders, including this Working Group, was being sought to develop the Plan.

It was suggested by one Member, that the Council's free car parking provision was actually incentivising short trips by private vehicles and not supporting and enabling sustainable travel. A review of the Council's Parking Strategy was due to commence imminently and this would be looked at as part of that review. There were, however, town centre regeneration/vibrancy objectives also to be achieved and a balance would need to be struck.

AGREED

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the Climate Emergency Action Plan be brought to a future meeting of this Working Group once finalised.

5. PENDLE CLIMATE FORUM TASK GROUP ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

The Director of Place submitted a report to provide the Working Group with detailed progress updates on Pendle Climate Forum Task Group's ongoing and planned internal and external engagement projects and activities.

With regards to internal engagement, carbon literacy training had been discussed at a meeting of the Council's Corporate Leadership Team and it had been agreed to develop themed, accessible, bite-sized, non-mandatory, training for all staff, with more tailored training for senior staff and Councillors. Delivery was expected from April 2024 for all levels of staff and from May 2024 for Councillors and would continue throughout the year. There would be an alignment of training topics with other relevant activities/campaigns i.e. the delivery of an active travel module during UK Bike Week in June. Councillors and staff, with approval from Managers, and subject to resources and impact on services, would also be encouraged to participate in any additional relevant training available to them.

Furthermore, In-Situ would be supporting the Council's climate engagement in 2024/25 through a series of activities including the delivery of 'Climate Fresks' and 'Talkeoke' sessions. A programme was currently being confirmed and additional activity would be planned, subject to resources and the outcome of funding bids. The first Climate Fresk event would be aimed at staff, key stakeholders and community leaders, with future events aimed at schools and communities.

With regards to external engagement since the last meeting, the focus of the engagement activity had primarily been on schools and communities.

Modeshift, a free-to-use online tool would be promoted in Pendle's schools from April 2024 to help them to record and monitor priority sustainability issues, such as air quality and to develop actions to support active travel. This tool was also being considered as a mechanism to support schools in the development of their own climate action plans.

There were plans for events and climate focussed activities to be delivered by local providers, such as In-Situ from May 2024 and for national events, such as Living Streets' Walk to School Week which would be taking place between 20th and 24th May 2024, to be promoted locally.

It was suggested that perception of safety was presenting as a barrier to active travel, so promoted safer routes to school were required.

The issue of engine idling whilst waiting at schools was raised. There had been banners displayed outside schools in Barnoldswick and Salterforth in a bid to stop engine idling and it was suggested that this be rolled out Borough wide. This could be picked up when supporting schools on air quality issues and there were already plans for the Council's Environmental Health Department to do some work with schools on pollution.

A new Schools Network, built on the previous Pendle Schools Climate Movement, would be reconvened in Summer 2024 to support schools on environmental issues and foster collaboration.

Engagement with communities continued to be based on key issues such as energy efficiency and managing health and wellbeing through active travel. There was ongoing work with partners to signpost and cross-refer to help meet the needs of residents, particularly those most vulnerable. The scale of engagement was, however, being managed until the new Climate Programme Manager was in post to secure additional funding from external sources.

It was asked if Citizens' Juries had been considered. They had, but they could not be progressed at this time for cost reasons, as they were very expensive to run and manage. Furthermore, the Council did not currently have the capacity to affect change and exert influence and it was likely that expectations would consistently not be met. All engagement activity, however, would be kept under review to ensure it was effective.

There had been some engagement with businesses, but further detail and clarification on the approach and focus of this activity was needed and would be confirmed following the recruitment of the new Climate Programme Manager. In the future, it was likely that there would be alignment with economic development projects and their funding, including UKSPF, Town Deal and Long-Term Plan for Nelson.

Engagement with landowners had yet to take place owing to delays with the implementation of the new Biodiversity Net Gain requirements under the Environment Act 2021. The requirements should have come into effect from November 2023, but instead came into effect on 12th February 2024.

AGREED

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That grassroot action be considered for inclusion in the Climate Emergency Action Plan as 'another action to explore/develop' to provide safer routes to school and in turn support Active Travel.
- (3) That support on engine idling issues be included in the support given to schools on air quality issues.
- (4) That all engagement activity be kept under review to ensure it was effective.

6. CLIMATE OFFICER POST BUDGET UPDATE

In a verbal update, Members of Working Group were advised that the funding of a dedicated Climate Programme Manager post had been agreed at the Special Budget Council meeting of 26th February 2024.

A copy of the draft job description for the Officer had been circulated to Members of this Working Group for their input and some feedback had been provided. The job description had since been finalised and was currently going through job evaluation in order for the salary and grade to be determined.

The post would be based in the Council's Economic Growth Team (Place Directorate) with the Policy Team (Resource Directorate) providing support with the wider community engagement elements, mainly community and school engagement.

It was expected that the recruitment process could commence after the Easter break.

Once recruited, the post holder would be in receipt of comprehensive induction training to provide them with the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to perform their role effectively.

AGREED

That the update be noted.

7. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

- **Colne's Treasure Our Town.** Treasure Our Town (TOT) created a very useful snapshot of the least loved and most forgotten parts of Colne administered by Colne Town Council under a past administration. After five year's absence, it was being re-started. It wasn't just litter picking. A series of neglected areas were chosen - not the Town Centre. Each of these areas were visited just once a year by the TOT team, which consisted of volunteers and Town Councillors, as well as representatives of local community groups. No session lasted more than one hour. One person made notes and one person took photographs. The rest looked for things that were praiseworthy or worthy of action to fix or repair. They did this while simultaneously litter picking. The outturn at the end was a defined and entirely litter free area. From the notes, a series of actions were then followed up. For potholes or pavements or street lamps the Love Clean Streets App could be used. For private businesses contact was made, asking for specific improvements or congratulating, as appropriate. There might be actions for Pendle Borough Council, such as S215s or planning enforcements. There might be more fundamental questions asked, such as: "Why is this like this, wouldn't it be better like this?". TOT was a time to reassess an area. As each area was visited just once a year, over time, the improvement to an area could be clearly demonstrated, with fewer and fewer negative things to report year on year. Extensive record keeping via a spreadsheet of actions showed the improvement was demonstrable. TOT instilled pride in Colne as a community.

There was an opportunity for further examples of good practice to be shared, but none were put forward.

AGREED

That the example of good practice be noted.

8. ITEMS FOR NOTING

- **Geothermal Energy Update.** Teams meetings had been held with South Tyneside Council, Driver's Consultants and with Professor Gluyas of the University of Durham. Further Teams meetings were being arranged with Hemiko and with Rossendale Heat Network. A face-to-face meeting was to be held with Driver's prior to a half day workshop in the North East. This was an extremely technical area. The costs were great, but the investment in Pendle could be too. The risks, when drilling was so expensive, were significant, but the technology was proven. There were other technologies that could be investigated in parallel, such as water abstraction from Pendle's canal network, or solar. It was clear that the very first thing Pendle Borough Council (PBC) should do is introduce itself to the twin Government funding bodies who would then allocate an Officer. 67% of the analysis needed prior to project applications was funded by them, with 100% of the project management fees. PBC could approach the LEP for help with the remaining third, as this area was part of their focus. PBC should also be aware that the guidance for the next round of Phase 4 of the Public Sector Decarbonisation was expected in Summer 2024 and that monies allocated in the Council's 2024/25 budget for Leisure Centres could potentially be used to support a grant to this fund.
- **Gib Hill Update.** A planning application for parking and related matters was working its way through the system, the registration with Natural England for this site having been made last

year. A meeting with Nelson Town Council and Colne Town Council was held with PBC's Operational Services and subsequently, both Town Councils agreed to allocate substantial funding to act as a fund for initial works and to support future grant applications. It was agreed that the best way of managing the new Local Nature Reserve was via a Friends Group in conjunction with PBC. It was agreed that each Town Council should put forward two representatives to sit on the new Friends Group. A group called Hillside Heroes already existed. It was a registered charity with a bank account. Phil Riley asked whether they would be prepared to change their name to become the body around which the new Friends Group would coalesce. It was agreed that he should contact them for discussions.

- **Electric Vehicle Charging Points in Car Parks.** PBC's Engineering Section had produced a Parking Strategy Scope as a basis for the Parking Strategy which would consider implications of EV charging points for both cars and bikes. A further report on the strategy findings and implications for EV charging infrastructure would be presented to this Working Group at a future meeting.
- **Pendleside Community Climate Change Action Day.** A free community event to inspire individual and collective action to tackle climate change would be held at St. Thomas' Church, Wheatley Lane Road, Barrowford, Nelson on Saturday, 4th May 2024 between 10:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m.

AGREED

That the items be noted.

9. ITEMS FOR A FUTURE AGENDA

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

- Safer Routes to School / Walking School Bus Schemes
- Electric Vehicle and Bike Charging Points in Car Parks
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Gib Hill Update
- Guest Speaker from Lancashire County Council's Climate Change Team

AGREED

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

10. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

That future meetings of this Working Group be held on the following dates:

Monday, 17th June, 2024 at 6.00 p.m.

Monday, 16th September, 2024 at 6.00 p.m.

Monday, 18th November, 2024 at 6.00 p.m.

Monday, 13th January, 2025 at 6.00 p.m.

Monday, 17th March, 2025 at 6.00 p.m.

Chair _____

Appendix 1 – Paper submitted by a Group Member following publication of this meeting's agenda.

ITEMS FOR CEWG TO CONSIDER SUPPORTING IN ACTION PLAN

- **Focus on cheaper Renewable Energy** (Onshore Windfarms, Solar, Hydro, Ground Source Heat Pumps, along with Offshore Wind, Tidal and Wave in light of the present Government's Energy Policy of more oil, gas, coal and unsustainable biomass fossils fuels and nuclear. Nuclear will take over 15 years to come on stream and will still emit CO2 when you take into consideration the whole nuclear cycle, from mining uranium, transporting and processing it, building power stations with concrete and the safe disposal of radioactive waste, as well as the extremely high cost of the process and the fact that nuclear power stations are mainly situated on the coast, making them easy targets of attack. With the present Energy Policy, the UK will fail to meet the 2050 target of net zero under the terms of the legally binding 2008 Climate Act and subsequent 2019, 2020, and 2021 Acts as well as fail to comply with the 2015 COP Paris Agreement to keep Global Warming to 1.5c.
- **Change in Land and Farming Practices** to reduce Pollution and improve the Biodiversity and Wildlife by planting more trees, restoring hedgerows, creating nature corridors, as well as protecting peatlands and wetlands and strengthening rivers to reduce the risk of flooding.
- **No more Building on Greenfields and Green Spaces.** Only Brownfield sites should only be used for housing and other developments. Existing housing should be bought up to eco standards with insulation and renewables wherever possible. Meanwhile existing householders should not be allowed to concrete over green spaces as they increase the risk of flooding.
- **As CO2 Global Emissions** have now exceeded the dangerous threshold of 420ppm, reaching the tipping point with Climate Change running out of control, rising temperatures and more severe and extreme weather events, the Action Plan should not only have **Measures to reduce the carbon footprint to net zero** (rather than carbon neutral as we have at the moment in Pendle's 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration) by 2030 but also **adaptive Measures to reduce the impacts of Climate Change**, such as flood defences, ensuring environments become carbon sinks, cleaning up rivers, aquifers and other sources of water and protecting human health and well-being. We should note that there is a **difference between Net Zero Carbon and Carbon Neutral**: Carbon-neutral means purchasing carbon reduction credits equivalent to emissions released, without the need for emissions reductions to have taken place. Net-zero means reducing emissions in line with latest climate science, and balancing remaining residual emissions through carbon removal credits. It is clear that carbon neutral credits have been discredited when people claim that all you need to do is to plant one sapling to replace one mature tree that has been chopped down and releases its carbon into the atmosphere, which can last between 300 and 1,000 years. To compensate for an average lost tree, planting should be at a ratio of at least 3 to 1 although it will take years to match the benefits of the felled tree as a carbon sink. We should also note that the **Climate Emergency Declaration covers the whole of Pendle** and not just the operations of the Council.
- CEWG should seek to include as many as possible of its Measures & Recommendations in the Action Plan in the **Pendle Local Plan** at the final Consultation Stage.
- CEWG should also maintain close links with **Climate Emergency UK and LancsCAN** so we can learn and share **achievable models of good practice** from each other, which can be **incorporated into our Action Plan**.
- Has CEWG sent an Article on **Carbon Literacy Training** to LancsCAN?
- I hope many members of the CEWG will attend the **LancsCAN second Annual Conference** in Preston on 6th June, 2024.