

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT OFFICE TEAMS
ON 16TH SEPTEMBER 2024**

PRESENT –

Councillor Sarah Cockburn-Price (Chair)

Councillors

*Zafar Ali
Chris Church
Kieran McGladdery
Ash Sutcliffe
Yvonne Tennant
Tom Whipp*

Co-optees

*Sylvia Godfrey
David Penney
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>Phil Riley</i>	<i>Green Spaces Manager</i>
<i>David Walker</i>	<i>Assistant Director Operational Services</i>
<i>Jessica Robinson</i>	<i>Committee Administrator</i>

Also in Attendance:

<i>Andrew Hewitson</i>	<i>Lancashire County Council (LCC)</i>
<i>Debbie King</i>	<i>LCC</i>
<i>Matthew Moll</i>	<i>LCC</i>

(An apology for absence was received from 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 15th July 2024 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. OVERVIEW OF LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S CLIMATE WORK

The Working Group received a presentation from Lancashire County Council's (LCC's) Head of Environment and Climate, Debbie King, on its climate work.

In the short-term, LCC was working on implementing its Environment and Climate Strategy 2023-2025 which focussed on the actions it had direct, or strong control and influence over, including reducing waste and tackling pollution, climate change and the natural and historic environment.

Bigger and longer-term strategic projects, on which there would be opportunity to link up with Pendle Borough Council (PBC), included:

- Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy – site selection for a pavement cable channel trial would be undertaken in the next few months and Pendle with its high proportion of terraced housing would certainly be a candidate.
- Active Travel.
- Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

PBC was currently developing its Car Parking Strategy and as part of that it was considering siting EV charging points on public car parks to be used by residents of terraced properties in the evening. It was asked if LEVI funding could be accessed for this? LEVI funding criteria was apparently quite strict and they had not been keen on the idea in other areas, but Pendle could make a strong case owing to its high proportion of terraced properties (62%).

LCC's plans with regards to improving rail transportation in the County were enquired about. As a Council, LCC had limited powers. LCC did have a Rail Officer who met regularly with the Rail Service Providers to discuss issues, but the key issues at the moment were national ones. Confirmation of funding and new legislation was awaited, but it was hoped LCC might have more local powers in future.

LCC was currently delivering a successful 2-year Treescapes Project to remove the barriers to woodland creation and tree planting. It was asked if Weets Hill could be considered as a potential site for tree planting to address flash flooding issues there. The Treescapes Team could certainly attend the site to assess its suitability and what measures might be appropriate, though the private ownership was noted.

Other LCC climate work included:

- Peatland restoration work in the Forest of Bowland.
- Trialling Biochar – carbon capture through soil.
- Analysis of organisational emissions footprint.
- Carbon descent plan.
- Highways Decarbonisation Strategy.
- Transitioning the Council fleet to EV.

Further information on LCC's climate work could be found at www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/climate-change.

It was asked how seriously climate change was taken by LCC's Highways and Transport Strategy (H&TS) 2023-2025 given that transportation was the biggest emitter of carbon after agriculture. The H&TS referenced carbon reduction and air quality throughout and decarbonisation was a key theme within it.

LCC's plans as the Education Authority to introduce School Streets and low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) around schools was enquired about. LCC would be looking to implement things akin to LTNs using Local Transport Fund funding (legacy HS2 funding) but the funding was only indicative at this stage and had yet to be confirmed. The roll-out of the current Safer, Greener and Healthier Streets initiative (SGHS) was being implemented in Brierfield, Colne and Nelson, the Working Group was informed. It was then asked if District Councils would be able to access this funding. The funding would be received by LCC only as the Highways Authority.

AGREED

- (1) That the content of the presentation be noted.
- (2) That thanks be given to Debbie King for attending this meeting.

3. ACTIVE TRAVEL

The Working Group received a presentation from Andrew Hewitson and Matthew Moll on Lancashire County Council's (LCC's) active travel plans and its Levelling Up East Lancashire: Creating Opportunities through Safer and Greener Travel (LUFEL) programme.

In Pendle the LUFEL programme would deliver:

- SGHS in Brierfield, Colne and Nelson.
- Accessible and Vibrant Town Centres through the Accessible Nelson programme.
- Public Transport improvements, including bus stop accessibility, intelligent bus priority and real time passenger information at bus stops.

LUFEL works would commence in Spring 2025 and complete in March 2026 as per the requirements of the LUF funding. LCC would be working collaboratively with Together an Active Future and Active Lancashire to deliver the programme. The programme was designed to address health inequalities and improve pedestrian and cyclist safety across East Lancashire.

Disappointment was expressed by one member that SGHS appeared to be restricted to LUF funded areas when there should be a commitment to improving every street not just those in the funded areas. Methodologies were being developed with a view to applying them more widely. It was hoped that the Local Transport Fund once confirmed could be used to roll successful LUFEL interventions out on a pan-Lancashire basis.

There was a new Active Travel Team that was currently forming and would be led by Chris Hadfield. This Team would be better placed than Andrew was to consider making such interventions, as they would have to be made outside of the LUFEL programme.

AGREED

- (1) That the content of the presentation be noted.
- (2) That thanks be given to Andrew Hewitson and Matthew Moll for attending this meeting.
- (3) That Chris Hadfield, Manager of the new Active Travel Team be invited to attend a future meeting of this Working Group.

4. FLEET DECARBONISATION REVIEW 2024

The Assistant Director Operational Services submitted a report to provide the Working Group with an overview of the findings and recommendations within the Energy Saving Trust's (EST's) review of Pendle Borough Council's (PBC's) operational fleet. A copy of EST's report was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report further provided an update on the carbon emission savings created through the use of Hydrated Vegetable Oil (HVO) within PBC's recycling, street cleansing and landscape maintenance fleet.

The EST review provided 13 recommendations which included options for PBC's fleet which was due for replacement in November 2026. The report advised that there were currently no suitable replacements for the 22t Refuse Collection Vehicles owing to issues with charging/running times and vehicle widths. The report also advised that the electric sweepers were not yet suitable for PBC's needs, nor were the electrically powered 3.5t units owing to not having the same payload or towing capacity as their diesel-powered alternatives.

The report suggested that Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs) could, however, be changed to electric powered alternatives and would achieve both carbon and cost savings over a four year lease per vehicle.

The report also suggested that PBC could investigate the use of electric cars, or small LCV, if it replaced its current petrol-powered units, in 2026. However, based on the report's calculations, petrol remained the most cost-effective option in that scenario.

The report recommended that the use of an electric car for the Mayor be investigated. Over a four year lease such a move could save between £10,000 and £16,000, dependent on vehicle chosen against the new version of the current Mayoral car. The Working Group felt other alternatives should first be explored, including the use of Operational Services' fleet vehicles.

Overall, financial savings created over four years, dependent on vehicles purchased, ranged from £23,000 to £29,000. Overall, Greenhouse Gas saving over the same period calculated to 50t. Based on this, it was suggested that the next vehicle contract should be termed for eight years to allow two cycles of savings over diesel alternatives to be achieved.

PBC now had 15 vehicles using HVO on a daily basis and these vehicles had used 28,340 litres of HVO between 1st January 2024 and 30th June 2024 and had saved 65,182.00kg of Co².

Local infrastructure and cost remained setbacks in moving fully to HVO. There were still no local forecourts supplying HVO fuels and re-purposed storage tanks at the Fleet Street Depot continued to be used and HVO was 19 pence per litre higher than road diesel. Manufacturer assurance that HVO would have no bearing on vehicle engines would also be required prior to a full move to the fuel.

PBC had incurred additional costs of £5,384.60 for fuel by using HVO between 1st January 2024 and 30th June 2024, but expenditure on fuel was still expected to remain within the previously forecasted figure of between £24,000 and £27,000 for full fleet usage.

It was asked what other ways of reducing fuel costs had been explored. The BARTECH system had been partially implemented and was progressing well. The system was enabling real time

missed collection reporting and speeding up communication between the Crew and the Back Office. It was expected that the system could be fully implemented by January 2025.

AGREED

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the subsequent increases in costs for fuel incurred for the continued use and the further expansion of the use of alternative fuels within Pendle Borough Council's (PBC's) recycling and landscape maintenance vehicle fleet be acknowledged.
- (3) That the Executive be recommended to support the Assistant Director Operational Services in introducing electric charging infrastructure and alternatively fuelled vehicles that would appropriately meet the operational needs of PBC's fleet and its carbon and cost reduction targets.

5. PESTICIDE USE

The Green Spaces Manager submitted a report on the current position on pesticide/herbicide usage across Pendle Borough Council (PBC).

Herbicide was used across (PBC's) assets and on behalf of Lancashire County Council Highways to control the growth of unwanted plant species and invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed. PBC had a legal responsibility under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to manage invasive species.

PBC used Glyphosate based herbicide on hard surfaces and selective non-glyphosate herbicide within grasslands. Over the past four years, various alternatives to Glyphosate had been explored, researched and trialled by PBC's Operational Services Teams to assess viability to actively reduce herbicide usage. Details of the alternative treatments used and the outcomes, both positive and negative, were provided in the report.

PBC had made substantial efforts to reduce usage of Glyphosate over recent years and now only used it where there was a determined need and desired outcome. Its use was always balanced against health and safety risks, cost and public perception.

It was reported that over 100 Councils across the UK had either ended their use of pesticides or taken significant steps towards doing so and that 50 were entirely pesticide free. It was also reported that pesticides had a documented link to Cancer, Parkinsons Disease and bee colony collapse and it was felt that people should be made aware of this, if they weren't already. It was suggested that Officer advice be sought on putting a proposal to Full Council or Executive, whichever was most appropriate, to both run an education/awareness raising campaign about the harm of pesticides and also to limit weed spraying to town centres only. Residents could be encouraged to undertake their own weed control away from town centres.

Some Members felt pesticide usage couldn't be restricted without first having a viable alternative for effective weed control. It was suggested that some of the Councils who had restricted or ceased their use of pesticides be asked how they now deal with weeds. It was also suggested that physical/manual interventions be considered.

AGREED

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the Executive be recommended to support the Assistant Director Operational Services in continuing to monitor the market for new advances in effective weed control and reducing herbicide/pesticide usage as much as possible.
- (3) That Officer advice be sought on putting a proposal to Full Council or Executive, whichever was most appropriate, to both run an education/awareness raising campaign about the harm of pesticides and to cease weed spraying outside town centres.
- (4) That some of those Councils who had ceased pesticide spraying altogether be contacted by the Green Spaces Manager and asked how they now deal with weeds.
- (5) That physical/manual interventions be considered by the Green Space Manager as possible alternative methods of weed control.

6. CLIMATE PROGRAMME MANAGER UPDATE

The Working Group was advised that a successful appointment to the Climate Programme Manager post had now been made and that their employment would commence on 23rd October 2024. Their immediate priorities would be making funding applications and developing Pendle Borough Council's Climate Change Strategy.

AGREED

That the update be noted.

7. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

A briefing paper on the Reuse 360 HUB Burnley, as an example of good practice, was submitted for the Working Group's information.

As agreed at the last meeting, Councillor Ash Sutcliffe, in his capacity of County Councillor, had contacted an Officer at Lancashire County Council about the Household Recycling Centre in Barnoldswick and they had indicated that they would be open to a conversation about potentially developing a re-use shop at the facility.

There were plans to use a site in Nelson town centre as a recycle/re-use/repair shop or cafe using Nelson Long-Term Plan for Towns (NLTPFT) funding. NLTPFT was, however, currently on hold pending further guidance from Central Government which was expected in October 2024.

AGREED

- (1) That the example of good practice and content of the briefing paper be noted.
- (2) That the Responsible Lancashire County Council Officer be invited to attend a future meeting of this Working Group to discuss potentially developing a re-use shop at the Household Recycling Centre in Barnoldswick.

8. ITEMS FOR NOTING

- **Local Plan.** Pendle Borough Council (PBC) had finished drafting the publication version of the Local Plan. The plan and a number of supporting documents were going to the Executive and Full Council on 19th and 26th September 2024 respectively and Member approval for a final six-week consultation and submission for independent examination would be sought. If approved, the consultation would take place in October and November, with submission targeted before the New Year. All being well the examination would take place in the Spring/Summer of 2025 with adoption in December 2025.
- **Building Stock Decarbonisation Programme.** The Heat Decarbonisation Plans (HDPs) had now been received for PBC owned operational buildings with a gas boiler. HDPs were a prerequisite for any Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) application. PSDS Phase 4, initially due to launch in August 2024, was currently on hold; further Government announcement on this programme was awaited.

North West Net Zero Hub was unsuccessful with their multi-authority bid to the Low Skills Fund in April which would have supported PSDS applications: mainly the development of HDP's and/or next stage technical designs for submission into PSDS. Support would still be available from the Hub and PBC were working with them to determine what this could look like in the future.

- **Climate Engagement Programme.** The Climate Engagement Programme was currently underway, as outlined at the last meeting by In-Situ. To date, five Climate Fresks had been delivered. A Climate Fresk event was planned for Thursday, 16th October at 6 p.m. at Colne Muni for all Councillors, CEWG Members and business leaders. A large-scale climate change event would be held in November/December (date t.b.c.) and materials produced to support longer term engagement. The findings report from this engagement programme would be considered at the next CEWG meeting.
- **Annual Emissions Report.** The 2023/24 Annual Emissions report has now been produced and would be considered by the Executive on 19th September 2024. Although emissions showed a downward trend, this was mainly due to passive, external factors such as decarbonisation of the national grid. A detailed analysis report would be submitted to next CEWG meeting.
- **RecycleIT.** RecycleIT specialised in sustainable IT solutions, offering services to both the public and private sectors. Their focus was on providing refurbished devices and effective e-waste management solutions. Additionally, they assisted companies with carbon offsetting initiatives and reducing their environmental footprint on a national scale. They were a Member of LancsCAN and keen to collaborate with partners on developing sustainable solutions.

AGREED

That the items be noted.

9. ITEMS FOR A FUTURE AGENDA

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

- Climate Change Action Plan
- Carbon Literacy Training

Climate Emergency Working Group (16.09.2024)

- EV Charging Points
- Gib Hill
- Community Energy
- Community Heat Networks / Geothermal Energy
- Rossendale Visit
- Pesticide/Herbicide Use
- Re-use shop at the Household Recycling Centre in Barnoldswick
- Guest Speaker from Lancashire County Council's (LCC's) new Active Travel Team
- Guest Speaker from LCC's Highways Team
- Presentation by RecycleIT

AGREED

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

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Monday, 18th November, 2024 at 6.00 p.m.

Chair _____