

North Yorkshire County Council

Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 20th October, 2022 commencing at 10.00 am.

County Councillor David Staveley in the Chair plus County Councillors Mark Crane, Melanie Davis, Caroline Goodrick, Hannah Gostlow, Paul Haslam, David Ireton, Mike Jordan, Steve Mason, Bob Packham, Phil Trumper, Arnold Warneken, Steve Watson and Robert Windass.

Officers present: Will Baines, Jos Holmes, Neil Irving, Michael Leah, Keisha Moore and Peter Jeffreys.

Apologies: County Councillors John Cattanach and David Jeffels.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

1 Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair, County Councillor David Staveley, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from County Councillors David Jeffels (County Councillor Andy Paraskos substituting) and County Councillor John Cattanach.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2022

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2022, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3 Declarations of Interest

County Councillor Steve Mason declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 as a business he holds a directorship in is referenced within the York and North Yorkshire Routemap to Carbon Negative report.

4 Public Questions or Statements

No public questions or statements were received.

5 Climate Change Strategy

Considered – A report from the Climate Change Policy Officer on the York and North Yorkshire Routemap to Carbon Negative and the development of the consultation draft of the Climate Strategy for North Yorkshire Council.

Key points in the report included:

- Over the past two years, the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (Y&NY LEP) has been leading on the development of the York and North Yorkshire Routemap to Carbon Negative (the 'Routemap'), which provides a clear, co-owned plan to achieve net zero for the region by 2034 and carbon negative by 2040.
- To ensure the effective implementation of the Routemap, high-level action plans will develop into detailed implementation plans. As part of these implementation plans, key milestones, success criteria and risks registers will be developed to enable performance to be tracked against the interventions set out in the Routemap.
- In a linked piece of work, the new Climate Change strategy for North Yorkshire Council (NYC) is at working draft stage and outlines the ambitions, themes and principles to be included. The strategy will outline where NYC can best deploy its resources to contribute to the targets in the Routemap.
- The new NYC Climate Change Strategy will outline the approach the new Council will take to reduce its own emissions and also to encourage and enable residents, businesses, communities and visitors to take 'climate positive' actions. This is in respect of not only reducing the causes of climate change but also to prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change both on our vulnerable communities and on biodiversity and ecosystems upon which we depend.
- The approach proposed differs significantly from the current NYCC Carbon Reduction Plan (which focusses on operational activity) as it will include the wider 'sphere of influence' and consider how every service can support the achievement of the ambitions.
- The four key chapters proposed for the draft NYC Climate Change strategy are: Mitigation; Adaption and resilience; Sequestration and carbon capture and Supporting nature.
- It was noted that partners had raised concerns that Biodiversity was not a standalone chapter, and the merging of chapters three and four has been suggested.
- The targets and ambitions adopted will reference the UN COP21 targets (The Paris Agreement) to substantially reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to limit the global temperature increase in this century to 2 degrees Celsius while pursuing efforts to limit the increase even further to 1.5 degrees. In terms of local targets, it will mirror the York and North Yorkshire Routemap to Carbon Negative ambitions and overall target to be a carbon neutral region by 2034 and carbon negative by 2040. Furthermore, NYC will strive to be net zero on operational activity by 2030.
- The graph at Appendix A of the report on the greenhouse gas emission figures for North Yorkshire shows the addition of Carbon Dioxide in the 2020 data in alongside the Methane and Nitrous Oxide used as part of the 2019 emissions data. It should be noted that the 2020 data for 'Transport' was affected by Covid-19. In subsequent years, 'Waste Management' is expected to be a bigger factor in the emissions data.
- The draft North Yorkshire Council Climate Change strategy, following consultation, will be considered by the Executive in May 2023.

There followed a discussion, with the key points as summarised below:

- A suggestion was made to increase anaerobic digestion generation capacity, but doing this by specifically growing crops to feed the digester rather than using waste.
- On the ambition set out in the York and North Yorkshire Routemap to Carbon Negative to reduce food waste by 30% by 2030, it was asked how this ambition had been decided upon and how it would be tracked. It was also noted whether the ambition in the Routemap for the decarbonisation of on-farm machinery is realistic.
- On agriculture, it was asked what dialogue with the National Farmers Union (NFU) has been undertaken as part of the development of the Routemap. It was explained this was through the Y&NY LEP and the Grow Yorkshire link for food and farming businesses. It was noted that the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority is supporting individual farms, with work to begin to look at the whole farm estate across the county, with NYCC using all tools to lead on this where possible.

- The new NYC Climate Change Strategy would be rolled out across the council through directorate-based climate reduction plans. For example, as part of the Economic Development Strategy, a key pillar of this will be the transition to the green economy.
- On including milestones to check on progress, in terms of the operations of the council, there will be a carbon budget and the setting of interim targets, to provide more information on how the journey is going as part of a KPI measure, such as on the vehicle fleet and buildings emissions.
- A question was asked about making sure that procurement chains are considering climate change implications. Although these are very hard to measure, it is the aim to work with suppliers on this, with responsibility for ensuring this to sit with the service experts in the directorates, who will be responsible for overseeing this.
- The ambition in the Routemap to retrofit homes to at least an EPC C rating, with a target of 180,000 homes by 2030 and 250,000 homes by 2038 was questioned. In response, it was noted that the Local Authority Led Housing Retrofit (LAD) scheme is currently ongoing to spend £8m across three districts. In North Yorkshire, it was noted that there is a large number of off-gas homes across the county, which are more expensive to retrofit and include protected landscapes. Work is also ongoing to ramp up the supply chain and grow the market in areas such as double glazing and insulation to allow retrofitting to take place. It is felt a long-term (10 year) approach is needed to have most impact and to give partners confidence, not just being responsive to government grant windows. For example, in Scarborough, the 'Hitting Hard' project is about utilising the expanding portfolio of housing decarbonisation funding opportunities for those living off-grid with properties that are harder to heat.
- It was felt that education and engagement are not covered enough in the Routemap to implement the necessary behaviour change in areas such as agriculture, water and sewage discharge.
- Given the potential loss of commercial bus services across the county, it was asked whether the Routemap ambition to reduce private car usage by 48% by 2030 is a realistic one. It was noted that transport is a major area, with NYCC adopting an innovative approach to progress this ambition, including installing EV chargers in rural areas, introducing and incentivising car sharing and car clubs and promoting Community Transport providers.
- The 'Green Schools Project' education training programme was highlighted as a good example for teaching climate change in schools.
- With the construction of new housing developments, are there opportunities to prescribe carbon reduction measures such as solar panels and EV charging infrastructure. It was noted that partnership working with North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership (NYBCP) on building regulations is taking place.
- It was asked whether enforcement action could be taken to improve poor quality insulated properties, with legal requirements required under the EPC. The need for a strategic plan for housing was emphasised, with builders required to fit low carbon technology. The retrofit of business premises with low carbon heating needs the same approach as residential properties.
- There is different terminology used at various points in the report. This was acknowledged and as part of the strategy document that goes out to consultation, a glossary of key phrases will be included.

During the discussion, County Councillor Steve Mason proposed an amendment that was rejected by the Chairman using their discretion. Subsequently, County Councillor Hannah Gostlow proposed that the motion be amended to add a recommendation that the Executive declare a Biodiversity emergency. This was seconded by County Councillor Steve Mason. A vote was taken on the proposed amendment to the motion but was lost.

Resolved –

- i. Members views on the York and North Yorkshire Routemap to Carbon Negative be

- noted and taken into account.
- ii. The feedback on the North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Strategy Consultation Draft – working draft stage be noted and taken into account.

6 Low & Zero Carbon Emission Transport Update

Considered – A report of the Assistant Director – Travel, Environment and Countryside on the progress of low and zero emission vehicles.

Some of the key points highlighted in the report are as summarised below:

- The York and North Yorkshire Routemap to Carbon Negative has set out a number of priorities and actions for the period 2022 - 2027 which include: to decarbonise and increase the use of public transport, enable the shift to low carbon vehicles and enable cleaner logistics.
- The Routemap has set out high-level targets for transport in York and North Yorkshire concerning the roll-out of battery electric buses, battery electric vehicles and sales of zero emissions heavy good vehicles.
- Following the Electric Vehicle Charging Deployment Study, funded by the NYCC Beyond Carbon Pump Priming Board, it is hoped to launch a public consultation on the study in late 2022 ahead of the County Council adopting the strategy later this winter. A network planning exercise will take place across North Yorkshire, leading to mass rollout of EVCPs. However, it must be noted that the electric grid infrastructure in the large and small towns is likely to be the greatest constraint on a wide scale rollout.
- On passenger and public transport, a successful bid to the Government Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas fund (ZEBRA) to improve commercial local bus services will see the entire Harrogate local bus operation converted to electric vehicles and depot upgrades.
- A longer-term strategy to reduce the impact of home to school contracted transport on the environment is required, as there are supply chain issues with purchasing EV accessible minibuses, making it more difficult to phase out older vehicles.
- A mix of different technology will be required across the NYCC transport fleet to accommodate the various needs and requirements of the services provided. An Energy Saving Trust review of the fleet is underway that is expected to report later this year.
- Discussions are planned with district and borough colleagues and waste vehicle suppliers to identify the power requirements of various waste collection routes to inform the most suitable mix of new refuse collection vehicles, with vehicle range a key consideration. There is an electric car and an electric van on order for to allow for operational trials with services.
- NYCC has been successful in a bid for £2m which focuses on delivering solutions using renewable energy that are aesthetically sympathetic in deeply rural areas where grid upgrades would otherwise be prohibitive and unattractive to the private sector for investment.
- NYCC is also proposing an exploratory study into winter service decarbonisation and how to reduce the environmental and carbon impact of this service. That work is coupled with a trial this coming winter season, where NY Highways have added two gritters each with an electric body to its fleet. The vehicles have an anticipated fuel saving of up to 20 per cent compared to standard, diesel-powered gritters.

There followed a discussion with the key points as summarised below:

- Ensuring that there is an equal distribution of the installation of EV charging points

across the district and boroughs in the county and the indications given in the report are not fixed.

- It was noted in response to a question on the funding of the ECV charging points that the successful bid to the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme will help with the financial gap, with further funding rounds to be undertaken next year.
- A suggestion was made to enhance school bus routes to pick up those who want to pay. This was not a straightforward issue but would be considered.
- Where EV charging points have been installed in village halls in rural communities, the anecdotal feedback is that they have been very well used.
- It was felt that vehicles turning over when stationary is damaging the environment and greater public awareness is required.
- New technology is to be launched for Home to School transport to enable attendance to be logged and recorded.
- There was a need to be flexible in the vehicle type and fuel procured for zero and low carbon emission transport, as no one size fits all. Electric and Hydrogen are not fuel solutions on their own, a blend is required to best suit the journey required.
- The majority of EV chargers installed will be rapid chargers, taking 30/60 minutes to a full charge.

In conclusion, the officers were thanked for attending, with an update report to return to the committee in 12 months.

Resolved –

For the committee:

- i. To note the report
- ii. To request an update in 12 months to include further information on emerging technology and financial commitments along with information on the locations of the electric vehicle charging points located across the county.

7 Allerton Waste Recovery Park - 2021-22 performance report

Considered – A report of the Service Waste Manager on the performance of the Allerton Waste Recovery Park for 2021-22.

Some of the key points highlighted in the report are as summarised below:

- Allerton Waste Recovery Park has been operational since 1 March 2018 and consists of a Mechanical Treatment (MT) plant, an Anaerobic Digester (AD) and Energy from Waste (EFW) facility to receive and treat residual waste.
- The recycling/composting of Contract Waste was 1.04% in 2021-22 against a contractual target of 5%. For 2022-23, it is forecast to rise to circa 2.2%.
- Mechanical issues with the MT equipment required the plant to be periodically run in 'by-pass' mode, which means recyclates are not extracted. Since maintenance works have been completed, MT performance has significantly improved, with Amey forecasting availability to be 73% this year, compared to 52% in 2021-22. Compositional analysis is also to take place.
- It has been challenging to place plastics with a limited number of off-takers due to it being recovered from the residual waste stream, combined with current market volatility.
- The amount of waste diverted from landfill improved significantly in 2021-22. A diversion rate of 89.4% was achieved in 2021-22, an increase of 8.46% against the previous contract year.
- The availability of the EFW is an important factor affecting diversion from landfill.

The EFW plant was available for more time (+6.5%) in 2021-22 compared to the previous year, which allowed more waste (+12.8%) to be processed. During the 9 months outside of the planned outages, the EFW plant achieved 93.9% availability. The reason for improved availability is due to far fewer unplanned outages arising from defects and operational failures. For example, Amey secured specialist advice from industry experts to trial and identify new refractory linings and fixings to improve longevity and negate the need for repairs prior to planned outages.

- Allerton Waste Recovery Park welcomed 162 people for onsite tours and delivered virtual sessions to a further 269 members of the public. Amey also continued to develop their education resources and materials engaging with schools, community groups and the libraries service.
- A number of outreach activities were undertaken over the year including the Great Big Green Week, Pumpkin-Fest and an NYCC COP26 workshop for schools.
- Contract year 2021-22 is the best year to date for landfill diversion and EfW availability. Works undertaken in April 2022 at the MT plant have benefitted the recycling performance that will be reflected in the 2022-23 update report.
- In 2022-23, further opportunities are being explored with the district and borough councils, Amey and Yorwaste seeking to optimise the types of waste delivered to the plant to secure continued performance improvements.

There followed a discussion with the key points as summarised below:

- The 2021-22 recycling performance, missing the 5% contractual target by a long way, was highlighted as a concern. It was asked if waste going into the site could be streamed to improve performance levels.
- The reliability of the electricity generated on-site and whether there is the opportunity to do more.
- The ability for parish and town councils to book visits to Allerton Park, as education is needed to address misconceptions about the site.
- An announcement from Government on introducing separate food collections is awaited, but in the meantime, work is going on to look at a number of different scenarios for how this could be accommodated.
- Taking advantage of the great educational opportunities available through the facility and outreach work into schools (e.g Love Food, Hate Waste)
- Whether energy storage is captured in the night time? It was noted that storing energy to be used at peak times is a developing area, with responsibility sitting with the contractor.
- It was requested that a climate change implications report be included in future performance reports to the committee, with the level of detail required to be determined in discussions with the Chair.
- It was asked if work is being undertaken on the development of future fuels such as hydrogen. It was explained that the EFW plant is looking into the possibilities of carbon capture and the technology available.

Resolved –

- i. To note the contents of this report
- ii. To request a further update on 2022-23 performance in 12 months time

8 Work Programme

Considered -

The report of Will Baines, Principal Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer asking the Committee to confirm, amend or add to the areas of the work listed in the Work Programme schedule.

Resolved -

- i. That the work programme be noted.

9 Other business which the Chairman agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 1:10pm.

The meeting concluded at 1.10 pm.