

# SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

## Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

### Meeting held 26 November 2020

(NOTE: This meeting was held as a remote meeting in accordance with the provisions of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.)

**PRESENT:** Councillors Mick Rooney (Chair), Ian Auckland, Steve Ayris, Ben Curran, Denise Fox, Julie Grocutt, Tim Huggan, Mike Levery, Cate McDonald, Sioned-Mair Richards, Jim Steinke and Alison Teal (Substitute Member)

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#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Douglas Johnson, with Councillor Alison Teal attending as his substitute.

#### **2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 In relation to Agenda Item 7 (Adjusting the Climate Emergency - An Update on Progress), Councillors Tim Huggan and Alison Teal declared personal interests as members of the Sheffield City Partnership Board.

#### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3rd September 2020, were approved as a correct record and, arising therefrom, the Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice Nicholson) reported that , although there was now a full schedule of meetings and items for consideration in respect of this and the four Scrutiny and Policy Development Committees, the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of all the Committees were still yet to meet to discuss issues with regard to meetings during the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

#### **5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

Members of the public raised questions as follows:-

##### 5.1 Rebecca Atkinson

(1) To successfully introduce decarbonisation policies, “buy-in” from communities is very important. Therefore, what wider evidence and consultation

was gathered to support the decision to cancel Sheffield's Climate Citizens' Assembly, given the availability of sophisticated video communication software?

5.1.1 In response, it was reported by Councillor Mark Jones (Cabinet Member for Environment, Streetscene and Climate Change) that the Sheffield Climate Citizens' Assembly had not been cancelled, but arrangements regarding the establishment of the Assembly had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Funding had been agreed by the Council, at its meeting in March 2020, towards hosting a Citizens' Assembly to drive forward the net-zero carbon ambitions of the Council. Prior to March 2020, the City Council had approached the Green City Partnership Board to ask members of that Board to act as a steering committee to drive forward the process. Given all the issues presented by the pandemic, it had been decided not to progress with the Citizens' Assemblies, mainly in light of the timing and potential lack of inclusivity if it was switched to being held online/virtually. Some preliminary work had been undertaken, and the Government had reported back on its National Climate Assembly. The Council fully accepted that climate change was happening, and urgently needed addressing, and that having a Citizens' Assembly would provide the Council with an opportunity to engage and promote the awareness of climate change. Despite the lack of a Citizens' Assembly, the Council had continued to undertake work to assess the issues regarding climate change, which had included commissioning reports and undertaking baseline and gap analysis. A Citizens' Assembly had to represent the views of everyone, and not simply the experts or those with a vested interest, and it had been considered that holding the Assembly remotely would present difficulties for all interested parties to participate.

(2) Methane emissions make up a small, but significant portion of Sheffield's greenhouse gas emissions. Are methane emissions increasing in Sheffield? What are the key sources of methane emissions across the City, and how challenging are they to reduce from current levels? Given the potency of methane emissions as a greenhouse gas, compared to carbon emissions, will there be no attempt to reduce them across the City?

5.1.2 In response, it was reported by Councillor Mark Jones that when the Commission was undertaken and taken forward by Arup and Ricardo (independent environmental consultants), methane emissions had to be included in the Baseline and Inventory Report. Mark Jones (Sustainability and Climate Change Service Manager) added that it was accepted that methane was a potent greenhouse gas, which had a multiplying effect above and beyond carbon dioxide, and this was taken into account in the calculations. The subsequent work had focussed on carbon emissions, as methane emissions account for less than 8% of the city's greenhouse gasses emissions. The wider engagement would explore how other action could help to reduce the emissions of these other gases, such as methane.

(3) Is Sheffield on track to reduce emissions by 14% for 2020, in line with the Tyndall Report which states "a rapid programme of decarbonisation is required, commencing in 2020 and averaging 14% year on year reduction"? What proportion of any reduction in emissions has come from reduced economic activity versus decarbonization in 2020 so far? By the end of 2021, will Sheffield be on track to decarbonize to levels recommended by the Tyndall Centres report, given current progress and accounting for any temporary reduction in carbon emissions due to

the Covid-19 pandemic?

- 5.1.3 In response, it was reported by Councillor Mark Jones that the figures which had been used in both the Tyndall Report, as well as the more recent Zero Carbon Commission had used data from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy national Local Authority emissions inventory (a Government database used for calculating the City's carbon emissions). This data was produced over 12 months in arrears, so the data for 2020 would not be received until next year. Mark Whitworth added that it should be noted that this was similar for all cities in the United Kingdom. It should also be noted that, whilst there had been some reductions in carbon use during the pandemic, energy consumption had recently started to rise back up to pre-pandemic levels. However, the City was still some way off achieving the rate of decarbonization required. The Council would be looking to use better tools and adopt better modelling in order to address some of the actions required to tackle climate change. It had been acknowledged that the Council needed to be clear and honest with the public on these important issues, and it was believed that the report now submitted made this clear, mainly in terms of indicating that, whilst progress had been made, it was clearly not enough, and much more work was required.

5.2 Rachel Hand

Will the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee commit to adopting the recommendations of the report? In particular, will they support the establishment of a cross-party climate change and sustainability committee, and the creation of a properly resourced team of sustainability officers, to both ensure and demonstrate that the Council is responding to the climate crisis in a sufficient and timely manner?

- 5.2.1 In response, it was hoped that the Committee would agree the recommendations in the report. In the light of the seriousness of the situation, and the need to move quickly on the issues regarding climate change, the discussions regarding the necessary resources required will be at the forefront of the discussions on the Council's budget for 2021/22. It was hoped that a committee comprising cross-party membership could be established to look at all aspects as to how the Council could work in a more sustainable and environmentally-friendly manner.

5.3 Jenny Carpenter (Read out by John Turner (Democratic Services))

Does the Committee recognise the need for both Members and officers to be trained in carbon literacy if the climate emergency is to be tackled in a timely and thorough-going manner?

- 5.3.1 In response, whilst Members of the Committee did not necessarily have a detailed knowledge of all the issues regarding climate change, they had a reasonable level of understanding. Members were fully aware of the serious nature of the damage being caused.

5.4 Lindy Stone (Read out by John Turner (Democratic Services))

How can the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee be assured that a

properly resourced team of sustainability officers will be created to take forward the necessary work?

- 5.4.1 In response, the Council will be giving serious thought to tackling the issues of climate change when setting its 2021/22 budget. There is appetite and will on the part of all Councillors to tackle climate change. Although there were likely to be issues in terms of a budget deficit, all options in terms of resourcing the work required would be considered, including the possibility of some existing officers devoting a set amount of time each week to work specifically on sustainability projects. There were a number of large businesses and organisations in the City, which could be approached in terms of either providing resources for the Council or undertaking their own initiatives to combat climate change.

## **6. ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY - AN UPDATE ON PROGRESS**

- 6.1 The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Place, on the progress made by the Council and its partners in connection with addressing the climate emergency and the Council's stated ambition of becoming net-zero carbon by 2030. The report set out details of the work undertaken, with the support of the Green City Partnership Board and other stakeholders in the City, in developing a comprehensive evidence base to underpin the City's approach to achieving net-zero carbon. The report provided a summary of the work, together with details of some of the initial findings, as well as setting out the proposed next steps.
- 6.2 The report attached a number of related appendices, including (a) The Sheffield Greenhouse Gas Emissions Baseline Inventory Infographic and Report, (b) Sheffield Net-Zero Carbon Gap Analysis Infographic and Report, (c) Setting Climate Commitments for the City of Sheffield – Quantifying the Implications of the United Nations Paris Agreement for Sheffield – The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research and (d) membership of the Green City Partnership Board.
- 6.3 In attendance for this item were Councillor Mark Jones (Cabinet Member for Environment, Streetscene and Climate Change), Mark Whitworth (Sustainability and Climate Change Service Manager) and Victoria Penman (Economic Policy Officer).
- 6.4 In addition to the report, the Committee received a presentation from Mark Whitworth. Mr Whitworth reported that Sheffield had a strong record of accomplishment on sustainability, and referred to the excellent work undertaken by former Councillor Alf Meade, who had been instrumental in establishing Sheffield Heat and Power, with Sheffield being one of the first cities in the UK to develop an energy recovery facility. More recently, the Council and its partner, Veolia, had been trialling electric refuse-collection vehicles. Mr Whitworth made reference to the numerous active and engaged businesses/organisations and individuals, who were already working to help the city towards achieving net-zero carbon. He referred to the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015, the Green City Strategy adopted by the Council in 2018, and the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2018 - Global Warming of 1.5°C and the declarations of a climate change emergency by Full Council in 2019. He reported on the impact already caused by global warming, the impacts of Covid-19, as well as the potential

positive changes, responses to the targets both nationally and globally, Sheffield's response, Sheffield's carbon budget, and the membership, aims and objectives of the Green City Partnership Board. Mr Whitworth reported on the actions taken by Sheffield in response to climate change, the Zero Carbon Commission, baseline emissions in the City and details of the challenge ahead and what the City was likely to see in Sheffield in terms of action to reduce carbon emissions. He concluded by referring to the wider opportunities and benefits of reducing carbon emissions, such as new jobs, warmer homes and healthier communities, and the next steps.

6.5 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-

- It was acknowledged that climate change represented a major issue for all, and that some people would find it daunting. Every effort would be made to help and guide people equally in terms of options they could take to do their own bit towards combatting climate change. Community wealth building and the uplifting of every citizen in Sheffield was paramount. One simple step people could take could be to support marketplaces in the City, with the aim of supporting local traders.
- The Council was seeking funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to enable grants to be allocated to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to take up energy-efficient measures, such as installing energy-efficient lighting and/or heating. In the longer term, the Council would explore what support could be provided through partner organisations, such as the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Universities, and from the Government and the Sheffield City region (SCR). Also, there was a need to build on the discussions held with local organisations, such as the Manor Castle Development Trust, in connection with providing the necessary help and advice to individuals, communities and businesses in terms of actions people could take to reduce their impact on the climate. The Council and others in the city needed to start planning for future changes, such as the move from gas boilers to heat pumps, and to look at how this could be done in a fair, equitable and cost-effective manner.
- The work to look at the City's greenhouse gas emissions has focused on Scopes one and two, which comprised energy that has been consumed in Sheffield, but generated elsewhere in the country and/or resulting in emissions, such as the burning of gas (as well as direct emissions produced here, such as vehicle emissions). This had been agreed as it was in line with the work undertaken on the carbon budget. Where products had been made in other countries, and transported to Sheffield, the carbon budget would be attributed to either those countries or to shipping or aviation. Shipping and aviation had a very large carbon budget apportioned to them. The Council and the city needed to consider those consumption and product emissions from products produced elsewhere, but consumed or used in Sheffield.
- It was acknowledged that a better public transport system was required in the City.

- Climate change and carbon impacts ran through many of the Council's considerations, and had been highlighted at all levels within the Council. The more the Council could highlight the issues of carbon literacy, the better.
- The Council was very supportive of local energy, and had replied to the National Policy Review. Councillor Mark Jones and Mark Whitworth had held discussions with the Northern Power Grid in connection with the move to more sustainable uses of power, such as the move to electric cars.
- Low traffic neighbourhoods represented a major initiative towards reducing carbon emissions, and further work was required to make roads safer, and to develop more, and better, cycle lanes.
- More work was required in connection with urban food growth and biodiversity, specifically looking at shortening our supply chains and having low carbon pastures on our upland farms. There was a need to re-intensify our food production in some sectors, whereas, in other sectors, we could follow the Dutch model looking to establish polytunnels and hydroponic culturing of food within the urban environment. At the UK Climate Assembly, discussions had been held in terms of promoting the health benefits of a plant-based diet and providing people with the opportunity of growing their own food.
- Whilst the City's heat and power system was efficient, the incinerator may not always power the district heat network, and the Council would need to look to introduce alternative sources of heating, such as heat pumps, and anaerobic digesters. There was also a need to speak to local communities on such issues in terms of where the infrastructure for such alternative power sources could be located.
- It was acknowledged that the Council needed an improved, more public-facing website as a method of increasing engagement with the public on issues regarding climate change.
- Climate View, a system recently developed in Sweden, and being piloted in Newcastle, enabled cities to develop a plan based around their existing baseline work, then break it down into smaller parts, which enabled cities to see how their actions would contribute towards carbon reduction. It was deemed a very powerful tool, and one which Sheffield wished to look to using, as well as look at how it was working in other cities.
- The electric refuse collection vehicles would be kept by the City Council and rolled out once the trial had been completed, and had been successful.
- The Council was constantly in discussion with Viola in connection with how the waste incinerator could be repurposed going forward. As part of this work, the Council would take Government advice in terms of waste streams into account.

- Work was ongoing to increase the number of rapid electric vehicle charging points in the City. It was acknowledged that, given the expected demand, the Council needed to ensure that there were more charging points available across the City. As part of the Connecting Cities work, the Council would not only be increasing the number of charging points, but also maintaining those existing points it was responsible for.
- Climate change was key as part of the consultation on the Local Plan, particularly with regard to sustainability and ecological diversity regarding future housing developments. More work was required on the concept of developing the 15 minute city, which aimed to ensure all residents were able to reach all key services and facilities within 15 minutes of their home, as well as ensuring that there were sufficient public transport options for people who needed, or chose, to travel longer distances.
- The final report aimed to cover the compelling reasons and some of the wider benefits that these zero carbon approaches would bring, whether it be across housing, transport or how we worked with industry. The report would also set out the actions needed, both as a Council and working with other organisations in the City. There were two parts to the report - the City decarbonization, which related to the Council and other organisations in the City, and a specific report on what the Council needed to do in order to reach net-zero carbon in all its operations. It was believed that one of the first actions required would be the retro-fitting of the Council's housing stock, together with energy production. It was likely that the final report would be ready for inspection by Members by early 2021.
- Climate change would have an impact on people with disabilities, such as those with respiratory problems therefore, there was a role for the health providers to take the necessary steps to decarbonise their operations and supply chain. It was understood that the Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had recently made a statement to this effect. The CCG was represented on the Green City Partnership Board.
- The Council already operated in line with its Ethical Procurement Policy which required, amongst other things, the invitation of tenders for significant projects from local businesses, which would help in terms of re-investing in the City's local communities, as well as helping to shorten supply chains. The suggestions made in terms of having a better connection to our food were fully supported.
- Engagement with, and how we communicate the issues regarding climate change to, the public, was critical. Rather than simply putting the evidence-base at the forefront, people needed to be asked what they wanted their city to look like going forward, as well as exploring how we can achieve carbon reductions together and the critical roles different groups, organisations and individuals could play. The evidence base could help to underpin those conversations. The city already had a Youth Cabinet, and it may be possible to establish a further Youth Cabinet with the intention of discussing issues regarding climate change. This would provide an opportunity for young people

to instruct and inform their elders in terms of what they wanted to see in the future.

- Climate change was a golden thread which ran through all Council portfolios. With regard to housing in the city, the vast majority was not Council owned, therefore there was a need for the Council, and its partners, to look at better initiatives going forward to ensure that such housing was retro-fitted and made future proof.
- In terms of the works going forward, the methods of engagement and communication needed to be very different. There was a need to find out how private homeowners could be influenced to undertake any relevant future proofing works to their properties, as well as the need to discuss the issues with registered landlords and other such organisations in an attempt to get them all involved. The public needed to be provided with assurances that there was a clear plan for the City, whilst being mindful that people would be asked to do things and make changes, that they may not necessarily agree with.

6.6 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the information now reported and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) agrees that the Scrutiny Chairs support and challenge their wider Committees on climate change;
- (c) supports the roll-out of carbon and climate awareness programmes for members and officers to attend awareness sessions; and
- (d) requests (i) the Executive Director, Place, to submit the Final Report addressing the climate emergency, as now mentioned to its meeting to be held on 28th January 2021, with responses to the issues raised at this meeting, setting out proposals in terms of future action and urgent response to the climate emergency in Sheffield, and the roles and responsibilities of the proposed cross-party Climate Change and Sustainability Committee and (ii) the Policy and Improvement Officer, in consultation with the Sustainability and Climate Change Service Manager to consider the governance option of this Committee taking on the role of the proposed cross-party Climate Change and Sustainability Committee, and report back thereon to this Committee at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2021.

**7. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21**

7.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice Nicholson) containing the draft Work Programme for 2020/21.

7.2 Members made a number of suggestions in terms of issues the Committee could scrutinise, including Brexit, Sheffield City Region and food poverty.



7.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the comments now made;
- (b) agrees the main item at the meeting on 28th January 2021, as Addressing the Climate Emergency; and
- (c) requests the Policy and Improvement Officer to make investigations into the suggestions now raised regarding Sheffield City Region and food poverty.

**8. ISSUES TO REPORT FROM THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

- 8.1 Councillor Denise Fox reported that the Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee had considered issues regarding the Sheffield City Trust, specifically the reopening of sports venues in the City, and a call-in regarding the Sheffield Covid Business Recovery Plan.
- 8.2 Councillor Cate MacDonald reported that the Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee had met on a monthly basis since September 2020, and, had considered three issues relating to Covid-19, including track and trace, general practice and mental health.
- 8.3 The Chair (Councillor Mick Rooney) reported that the Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee had discussed the effects of Covid-19 on education at its last two meetings, one from the perspective of schools and one from the perspective of pupils, represented by the Sheffield Youth Cabinet.
- 8.4 The Committee noted the information now reported.

**9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020, at 10.00 am.