

**Minutes of the Climate Emergency Taskforce
Chester HQ Building
17 January 2023 (6.00pm – 8.00pm)**

Members:

- Councillor Louise Gittins (Leader of the Council)
- Councillor Lucy Sumner
- Councillor Keith Millar
- Councillor Hugo Deynam
- Councillor Simon Eardley (Shadow Cabinet member for the Climate Emergency)
- Councillor Chris Copeman
- Councillor Gillian Edwards

Wider Taskforce Members:

- Rebecca Collins, University of Chester
- Niall Macfadyen, Chester Sustainability Forum
- Paul Nolan, Mersey Forest
- Jennifer Kelly, Chester Zoo
- Michael Wolffe, Cheshire and Warrington LEP

Officers:

- Rose McArthur, Director of Transport, Highways and Climate Change
- Jack Mayhew, Principal Transport Planner
- Will Pearson, Climate Change Strategy Manager
- George Ablett, Energy Sector Specialist

Apologies:

- Councillor Gina Lewis
- Charlie Seward, CW&C
- Adam Briggs, NFU
- Alistair Jeffs, Vivo
- Charlotte Harris, CWT
- Lyn Brown, CW&C
- Phil McCabe, FSB
- Mark Thompson, Chester Sustainability Forum
- Ashley Rogers, North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council

1 Welcome and introductions

Cllr Louise Gittins welcomed everyone to the meeting and reiterated the importance of the topic of Climate Change to Cheshire West and Chester Council and thanked the stakeholders present for their ongoing contributions.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received.

3 Declarations of interest

- No new interests were declared.

4 Public Questions

Cathey Harrington spoke on behalf of the Chester Cycling Campaign. Cathey welcomed the ambition in the LTP4 document, and asked how the Council was progressing in relation to the ambitions in the Climate Emergency Response Plan. Cathey noted that the KPI m5 measure related to cycling and walking was a red, as interest in cycling had declined after COVID, and questioned whether there was anything further the Council could do to promote cycling in the context of other rural counties, which Cheshire West is in the middle of the pack of. Cathey finally noted the cycling and walking infrastructure plan, and the aspiration to develop a network of routes and expressed the Cycling Campaign's interest in working with the Council to develop an integrated network. Cllr Gittins thanked Cathey for these points, and noted the links with Michael Marmot's work on health, and that the devolved powers available in places such as the Liverpool City Region would aid in the development of integrated transport networks. Rose McArthur further welcomed the points and reinforced the potential benefits of devolution of transport powers and funding. Gathering further data to understand behaviours and ensuring accurate counts of cycling and walking was noted as an important step.

Ashley McCraight spoke on behalf of Cycling North Cheshire, and raised points relating to comms and the funding of active travel plans. Ashley also commended the development of the plan, but noted that some concerns remained. He noted that car travel demand had not reduced during the last 4 years, so there was a need to increase the pace of action and think innovatively. He discussed that Council communications should include updates on issues on things such as traffic levels, heat loss from and carbon usage in buildings. Will Pearson noted that a video has in production noting some of these issues, and would be released on social media shortly. Rose McArthur welcomed Ashley's points and said that the Local Integrated Transport Settlement (LITS) would potentially be influential in funding transport in future.

Niall McFadyen, Chair of the Chester Sustainability Forum, offered for the Forum to be involved in the next phase of the LTP's development. He requested to see the outcomes of the LTP3, and how Transport was performing against its targets in the CERP. Niall went on to cover the Biodiversity benefits of improving travel and transport, and that this could help to contribute to the 10% BNG uplift requirements for future development. He noted the importance of climate resilience, and cited the River Dee project, and noted the need for clarity on the terms air pollution and air quality, advocating that the term air pollution should be used in the context of engine idling and PM2.5. It was agreed that the 2023 annual report would be shared with the taskforce for the next meeting.

5 Local Transport Plan 4 – Rose McArthur, Jack Mayhew

Rose McArthur and Jack Mayhew presented on the development of the LTP4. Rose presented an overview of the work and noted the importance of engagement as part of the process.

Jack went on to discuss that Transport shapes our lives and communities, connecting people to opportunities, defining our neighbourhoods, and supporting our businesses. It is key to tackling climate change and combatting poverty.

He went on to cover that in this initial stage of engagement, respondents are being invited to provide their views on the borough's current transport system and the big issues we face, to develop a draft vision and priorities for the future of local transport. This will form the basis of the borough's Local Transport Plan 4.

700 responses had been received to date on the early engagement phase. A range of data and statistics were presented, which are available via the Council's Participate Now platform. A discussion took place regarding the questions raised on the Plan for transport, and how it responds to the challenges raised. The ambitions in the plan were:

- Tackling the climate emergency;
- Creating a fairer society
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Boosting our local economy
- Creating great places to live.

The way the Council intended to approach this is:

- Targeted, data-informed action
- Adapting to a changing world and using transport to shape the future
- Ensuring a real choice of travel modes
- A behaviour change mindset

Jack shared the following opportunities for engagement:

- Storyhouse, Thursday 18 January 2024 2pm-6pm
- University of Chester Library, Friday 19 January 2024 10am-2pm
- Online webinar, Monday 22 January 2024 5:30pm – 6:30pm. Registration online at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ZM7A26/>

To take part in the online survey, visit www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/LTP4 or contact the transport team at LTP4@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

8 Next steps

It was noted that the next meeting of the group would be relating to Energy and Industry, and would take place in May, giving the taskforce the opportunity to consider the important matters linked to the borough's future industrial development, including the energy network, hydrogen, carbon capture, etc.

As part of a wider discussion, the importance of youth engagement was discussed, and Jennifer Kelly and Rebecca Collins agreed to engage with members from

Chester Zoo and Chester University's youth forums respectively to explore if we could expand membership of the taskforce to include more young people

It was agreed that the 2023 annual report would be shared with the taskforce for the next meeting.

9 Action Log

One of the agreed actions from this meetings was that actions would be collated in a log, to be regularly monitored. The first iteration of that log is below:

No.	Action	Responsible	Status	Timescale
1	Circulate annual report	WP		May 2024
2	Share annual report video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVtlwcknJHU&t=2s	WP		Spring 2024
3	Expand youth involvement in Taskforce	WP/JK/RC		May 2024
4	Schedule future Taskforce meeting re: Comms	WP	TBC	Summer 2024