

Minutes of the Climate Emergency Taskforce
Chester HQ Building
21 May 2024 (6.00pm – 8.00pm)

Members:

- Councillor Louise Gittins (Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for the Climate Emergency) (Chair)
- Councillor Lucy Sumner
- Councillor Keith Millar
- Councillor Hugo Deynam
- Councillor Simon Eardley (Shadow Cabinet member for the Climate Emergency)
- Councillor Gillian Edwards
- Councillor Gina Lewis
- Councillor John Roach (Substitute for Cllr Chris Copeman)

Wider Taskforce Members:

- Ashley Rogers, North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council
- Charlie Steer, Grosvenor Estate
- Steve Hughes, Chester Sustainability Forum
- Niall Macfadyen, Chester Sustainability Forum
- Paul Nolan, Mersey Forest
- Gwydion Rhys, NHS
- Jayne Hennessy, Peel L&P
- Melissa Crellin, Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington
- Michael Wolffe, Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington
- Jennifer Kelly, Chester Zoo
- Amy Catton, Youth Senate
- Will Joy-Camacho – Chester Zoo Youth Board
- Lyndon Howson – Chester Zoo Youth Board

Presenters/Guests:

- Rachel Shorney – SP Energy Networks
- Rebecca Kannreuther – SP Energy Networks
- Oliver Harry – Encirc
- Rachel Hodges – Cubico Sustainable Investments
- Duncan Birtwistle (Progressive Energy)

Officers:

- Will Pearson, Climate Change Strategy Manager
 - George Ablett, Energy Sector Specialist
- Apologies:
- Councillor Chris Copeman
 - Rose McArthur
 - Charlotte Harris, Cheshire Wildlife Trust
 - Rebecca Collins, University of Chester
 - David Brown, Environment Agency
 - Alistair Jeffs, Vivo Care Choices
 - Mark Thompson, Chester Sustainability Forum
 - Adam Briggs, NFU

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**

Andrew Needham discussed the establishment of GB Energy and the likelihood of a planned expansion of renewable energy. He noted that in his capacity as a member of the Energy Institute, he was writing a report for Energy World, the journal of the Energy industry, on this topic. Cllr Gittins thanked Andrew for his precis of the topic.

5 **Energy Overview and Update – George Ablett**

George Ablett presented on the latest energy position in Cheshire West and Chester. He discussed the following consideration -

- Electric
 - Reduction through efficiency technologies
 - Increase generation from renewables/Nuclear
 - Storage 'Wasted wind energy costs Brits nearly £1bn'
- Gas
 - Centralisation
 - Reduction through electrification of heating and cooking
 - Capture and reuse or storage (battery/hydrogen)
- Transport
 - Fuel change
 - Modal shift

He went on to cover that some of the most notable opportunities involved the transition to a smart grid, the hydrogen economy, and nuclear, all of which have significant potential in Cheshire West.

George noted the strength of partnerships in the borough, across industry and education. The following actions were noted relating to energy:

- Revise the evidence supporting the Local Plan
 - (New Builds and renewable energy)
- Contribute to the Local Area Energy Plan through ECW
- Support for decarbonisation through Origin
- Support for businesses through UKSPF
- Support for housing decarbonisation
 - (HUG, ECO4 and Solar Together)

- Role out of the EV infrastructure programme
- Work in partnership with the DSO and ESO to ensure prioritization in NW
- Address the Skills gap

6 SPEN – the future of the grid

Cllr Gittins then welcomed Rachel Shorney and Becki Kannreuther of SP Energy Networks to the meeting, to provide an update on the approach to and progress of decarbonising the grid in West Cheshire. Rachel provided an insight into the challenges of decarbonisation and the interaction between SPEN and National Grid, including the new National Energy Systems Operator (NESO). It was discussed that private wire opportunities could be more realistic and deliverable in the short term as they did not exacerbate grid constraints. Rachel discussed that the grid's context had changed dramatically since it was constructed in the 1950's/1960's and that there was a need to fundamentally rebuild the network rather than attempt to keep the current grid functionally the same while incrementally increasing capacity.

7 Encirc – the future of glass

The Taskforce welcomed a presentation from Oliver Harry on the future of Encirc and the glass it produced. Oliver noted the position of Encirc as a leading glass manufacturer in the UK, producing a sizeable share of UK glass beverage bottles, and that it was committed to rapidly decarbonising its operations. As part of the HyNet project, this will involve receiving a supply of Low Carbon Hydrogen, however Oliver noted that this was only part of the story, as the furnaces of the future will be powered by both electricity and hydrogen, working in tandem. Oliver received questions from Mike Wolffe, Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington on Solar direct wire opportunities, Cllr Bryan on the project to mark bottles with QR codes, and Niall McFadyen on carbon capture mechanisms.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Taskforce would be a workshop focused on the Climate Emergency Response Plan.

8 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 (to be actioned following workshop on Climate Emergency Response Plan)	WP	TBC	Summer 2024
5	Future agenda item: Nuclear and its role in Cheshire West and Chester	WP	TBC	Spring 2025