

**Minutes of the Climate Emergency Taskforce
Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 18 September (6.00pm – 8.00pm)**

Members:

- Councillor Gina Lewis (Chair)
- Councillor Lucy Sumner
- Councillor Keith Millar
- Councillor Hugo Deynam
- Councillor Simon Eardley (Shadow Cabinet member for the Climate Emergency)
- Councillor Gillian Edwards
- Councillor Chris Copeman

Wider Taskforce Members:

- Charlie Steer, Grosvenor Estate
- Steve Hughes, Chester Sustainability Forum
- Niall Macfadyen, Chester Sustainability Forum
- Paul Nolan, Mersey Forest
- 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
- Charlotte Harris, Cheshire Wildlife Trust
- Rebecca Collins, University of Chester
- Tamara Hunt, University of Chester
- David Brown, Environment Agency
- Adam Briggs, NFU

Presenters/Guests:

- Will Pearson, Climate Change Strategy Manager
- George Ablett, CW&C

Apologies

- Ashley Rogers, North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council
- Mark Thompson, Chester Sustainability Forum
- Gemma Davies, CW&C
- Councillor Louise Gittins (Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for the Climate Emergency)
- Alistair Jeffs, Vivo Care Choices
- Rose McArthur

1 Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that this would be a workshop session dedicated to shaping the Council's next Climate Emergency Response Plan.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received.

3 Declarations of interest

- No new interests were declared.

4 Public Questions

N/A

5 Shaping the next Climate Emergency Response Plan

Will Pearson presented an outline of the Climate Emergency Response Plan. He discussed progress during the Council's current Climate Plan, such as progress on decarbonisation, grants secured from Government, the development of various strategies, the Trees for Climate programme, etc.

Will presented a graph relating to emissions within Cheshire West and Chester and noted that emissions had decreased significantly between 2021 to 2022, with the largest drop in industrial emissions.

He discussed the "three pillars" which the second iteration of the Climate Plan are structured around. These were: West Cheshire's opportunities and challenges, How we work together, and Delivering on our plans.

The development of the evidence base for the Plan was considered a key priority, with Will referencing a variety of datasets which have been used to inform the plan.

Will outlined the importance of stakeholder engagement and the methods that have used to gather stakeholder views to inform and shape the development of the draft plan.

Following this overview of the background to the Plan, Will presented an exercise, within the context of the Anthesis Setting City Area Targets and Trajectories for Emission Reduction (SCATTER) methodology, for the Council to discuss the extent of the challenge it continues to face on climate change. The session plan was focused around:

- Reviewing the area's key sectors;
- Reviewing the 2019 ambition levels;
- Reviewing the 2024 SCATTER ambition levels for the same scenario;
- Reviewing key indicators of decarbonisation per theme;
- Discuss aspirations/key challenges for each theme.

The exercise progressed to discuss the six key themes within the draft Plan, Energy, Housing, Transport, Industry and Commercial, Land use adaptation and climate repair, and Waste and Recycling.

6 Discussion

Extensive discussion took place on each of the themes of the Plan. The Taskforce discussed the challenges of decarbonising Energy, and the scale of renewables that would be required to meet the highest SCATTER pathways. The Local Plan was discussed as a key factor in this context, in balancing the need for energy with a wide range of other considerations. The group discussed challenges relating to grid capacity and opportunities for heat networks, and that the development of Local Area Energy Plans could be a key priority in shaping the placement of renewables in the future. The Taskforce considered that providing incentives and ensuring it was as easy as possible to install renewables for residents would be important. The Taskforce suggested that energy companies providing only renewable/sustainable energy were a template for other companies to replicate.

Rebecca Collins noted that partnership working would be key in progressing the Plan, and that this needed to be within the context of organisations' strategic plans, resource availability and timelines.

The Taskforce discussed the need for recommended changes to be both consent-based and sensitively communicated. Especially where lifestyle changes are recommended, the Taskforce's suggestion that these should be based on encouragement to make proportionate changes, rather than in a way that could be perceived as judgemental.

Colleagues discussed that industrial/business parks should be supported in their aspiration to decarbonise through both advice and where appropriate (and funded by mechanisms should as Government should), grants/other financial support to decarbonise.

Cllr Lucy Sumner noted a number of interventions that are promising in improving air quality, such as CityTree, Moss walls, and noted the important role of peat moss on carbon sequestration.

In relation to natural capital, the Taskforce expressed an interest in industrial/larger businesses considering natural capital investment on their own sites, in order to enhance biodiversity, and enhance natural resources, such as through better management of water in the landscape.

On the Transport theme, the Taskforce discussed that there was a need to make public transport "easier, more pleasant and more convenient" for users. Without this, it was considered infeasible for there to be a significant shift away from private car use. The local transport plan 4 was discussed as being a great opportunity to create a positive shift in local transport, which could promote active and public transport. The introduction of a successful demand responsive transport pilot in the borough was cited as an example of how modern transport solutions could meet the needs of rural communities.

The Taskforce discussed the limitations faced by the Council related to enforcement of higher minimum energy efficiency standards for new build homes, and that the adoption of higher standards by the Government would be an essential factor in allowing Local Authorities to set and enforce high standards. The challenges of reducing emissions from Housing overseeing a significant expansion in housebuilding, as the Government has asked the Council to do, were noted.

The Taskforce discussed the potential of separating out Adaptation from the land management theme. Will discussed that that would be considered as part of the ongoing development of the Plan, subject to feedback during the consultation period.

7 Action Log

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		Summer 2024
5	Future agenda item: Nuclear and its role in Cheshire West and Chester	WP	TBC	Spring 2025