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**Report to:** Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership Board (LEP Board)

**Date:** 20 January 2021

**Subject:** **Green Economy Panel**

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**Director:** Alan Reiss, Director of Policy, Strategy and Communications

**Author:** Ambrose White, Policy Officer

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## 1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. To provide the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board with a progress report on significant areas of activity related to the Green Economy Panel (GEP) as discussed at the meeting held on 18 November 2020.

## 2. Information

### Carbon Emission Reduction Pathways

- 2.1 The Combined Authority declared a climate emergency and strengthened the West Yorkshire emission reduction target in July 2019. The strengthened target commits the region to be net zero carbon by 2038 at the latest, with significant progress by 2030. The task is extremely challenging and will require significant, swift and collaborative action to decarbonise all sectors.
- 2.2 The Carbon Emission Reduction Pathways (CERP) study was commissioned to demonstrate how the climate emergency could be addressed, and the strengthened target met. It can also guide West Yorkshire Councils and businesses in addressing their own climate emergency declarations and targets.
- 2.3 The study focusses on the transport, buildings, power, industry, and land-use and agriculture sectors. It consists of three main tasks: developing three emission reduction pathways, setting timescales for decision-making and deployment, and identifying policies and actions that need to be implemented.
- 2.4 LEP Board were presented with an overview of the key findings of Task 1 (developing the pathways) at their 14 July meeting, with the outputs endorsed by the Combined Authority at their [27 July meeting](#).
- 2.5 An overview of progress to develop Tasks 2 (setting timescales for decision-making and deployment) and 3 (identifying policies and action that need to be

implemented) of the study was presented to the Panel. This included a presentation on the emerging outputs of Task 3 of which 86 policies / actions and 27 influencing asks have been suggested by the Combined Authority's independent advisors as potentially needing to be implemented to achieve the regional target. These policies / actions and influencing asks are across the five sectors covered by the study.

- 2.6 The Panel heard that significant engagement has and is currently taking place with West Yorkshire Councils on the outputs of Tasks 2 and 3. This is in advance of presenting the findings of the work to the Combined Authority Board in March prior to a wider engagement process with stakeholders.
- 2.7 The purpose of the engagement is threefold:
- To raise awareness of the outputs of Tasks 2 and 3.
  - To understand concerns, appetite and acceptance for the policies and actions put forward from a wide range of stakeholders.
  - To inform the immediate priorities for delivery against the climate emergency for West Yorkshire.
- 2.8 Feedback received from stakeholders along with the outputs of the study will be used to inform a new Tackling the Climate Emergency Action Plan for the region to be developed in the first half of 2021. The study will also help to shape the Strategic Economic Framework and West Yorkshire Investment Strategy, placing the need to address the climate emergency at the heart of these documents.

#### Scaling Up Better Homes Yorkshire

- 2.9 A summary report for the Scaling Up Better Homes Yorkshire study was provided to the Panel. This project has been developed with Better Homes Yorkshire partners to explore the evidence and options to support an ambitious 10-year programme of domestic energy retrofits.
- 2.10 The report proposed a ten-year programme to retrofit up to 300,000 homes in West Yorkshire by 2030, mobilising up to £2.4 billion per year - saving around 1.8 million tonnes of carbon each year. A series of recommendations were set out to support delivery of this programme, including delivery options, creation of a retrofit hub and community of interest; lending to different socio-economic groups; "whole house" retrofit demonstration projects; training and skills development.
- 2.11 A detailed project plan with resource implications will be brought to the Green Economy Panel for endorsement in 2021.

#### Major Projects Report

- 2.12 A summary of the other major GEP projects and programmes supporting the region to tackle the climate emergency discussed at the meeting are below:

## Leeds City Region Energy Accelerator and District Heat Network

- 2.13 The Energy Accelerator (Accelerator) is a new innovative programme developed under priority three of the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) which aims to create a zero-carbon energy economy by 2036. The Accelerator provides a team of expert advisors that are supporting the development of low carbon projects.
- 2.14 The Panel heard that the Accelerator has been operating for over 18 months and is on track to achieve targets set by the European Investment Bank (EIB), funders of the programme, with 12 low carbon projects receiving support, including energy efficiency retrofit projects, district heat projects and a Street lighting project. It was reported to the Panel that COVID19 and Brexit was affecting the numbers of projects progressing through the programme.

## Better Homes Yorkshire

- 2.15 In addition to the Scaling Up project considered by the Panel earlier in the meeting, the Panel heard that various Councils within the City Region continue to deliver locally led energy efficiency and fuel poverty programmes including Warm Homes Funded projects, albeit work was currently on hold due to coronavirus restrictions.

## Re-Biz

- 2.16 The Resource Efficient Business (RE-Biz) programme is a successor programme to the Resource Efficiency Fund and officially commenced on 1 January 2020. The aim of the project is to increase energy efficiency and environmental resource efficiency (ERE), covering energy, energy efficiency water and waste, in SMEs in the whole of West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire through advice and support, investment in ERE and delivery of a circular economy pilot.
- 2.17 The project continues to operate during the COVID19 pandemic but challenges around business engagement and participation were reported. Site visits from Resource Efficiency Managers had resumed where possible but access was restricted, an issue which also affected audit activities. The Panel heard that despite this the team had achieved 128 client contacts, with 41 assessments commissioned and 30 individual business assists completed, resulting in seven grant payments being made. A further eight grant applications had been approved at the time of the Panel's meeting.
- 2.18 A marketing strategy and rollout timeline has been developed to ensure the project regains traction including the use of wider regional business support networks and promotion through paid advertising and social media platforms.

## Flooding

- 2.19 The Panel received an update on progress to update the pipeline of flood alleviation schemes for the 2021/22 funding period, alongside identification of a focused package of investment activities. This emerging plan requires £120 million of government investment, which will unlock local public and private contributions for 28 priority schemes and deliver a £15m Natural Flood Management (NFM) programme, provide enhanced flood protection to approximately 26,300 homes and 4,700 existing jobs, equating to c.£1 billion in GVA per annum.
- 2.20 The Panel heard that to date £17.846 million had been awarded to eight projects which had a total value of £195m, of the £20 million Growth Deal funding approved by the Combined Authority in 2017 for the Flood Alleviation for Growth programme.

## Energy Strategy and Delivery Plan (ESDP)

- 2.21 The Energy Strategy and Delivery Plan (ESDP) was adopted in 2018, and 20 projects are underway or completed, with a further 19 projects pending the outcome of the Carbon Emissions Reductions Pathways work.

## Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy and Delivery Plan

- 2.22 The GBI Strategy and Delivery Plan was adopted by the Combined Authority in December 2018 and sets out how GBI can contribute to achieving a zero-carbon energy economy to be underpinned by high-quality GBI. The Panel were provided with an update on a new Green Infrastructure Standards Trial, being developed by Natural England, for which temporary resource is in place to help local delivery.
- 2.23 The Panel were provided with an updated high level COVID19 risk assessment, which provided an overview of current impact of COVID19 on delivery of these major operational schemes. Although some projects have returned to being on track after initial delays, a number of schemes were noted to be delayed as a result of the impact of COVID19 on delivery.

## West Yorkshire Combined Authority Corporate Approach to tackling the climate emergency

- 2.24 The Panel heard that the action plan approved by Combined Authority in October 2019 continued to be delivered, including inclusion of carbon and consideration of the Climate Emergency being included in all decisions made by the Combined Authority and LEP. The Panel was provided with an update on the work to develop a strengthened, robust, quantifiable methodology for strengthening decision making in the light of the Climate Emergency, and that the Combined Authority had won the MJ Achievement Award for Leadership in tackling the Climate Emergency in October 2020.

### **3. Clean Growth Implications**

- 3.1 The work outlined in this report is vital to ensuring that the city region can create clean growth and decarbonise key sectors by 2038, with significant progress by 2030.

### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications directly arising from this report.

### **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

### **6. Staffing Implications**

- 6.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

### **7. External Consultees**

- 7.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

### **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1 That the LEP Board note the recent work of the Green Economy Panel.

### **9. Background Documents**

- 9.1 None.

### **10. Appendices**

- 10.1 None.