
Report to: West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Date: 9 December 2021

Subject: **COP26 and the West Yorkshire Climate & Environment Plan**

Director: Liz Hunter, Director Policy & Development

Author: Daniel Barrett, Head of Energy & Environment

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To inform the Combined Authority of the outcomes, implications and next steps following the conclusion of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26), Glasgow, UK.
- 1.2 To highlight the proposals in the West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan to be prioritised first for delivery by the Combined Authority.

2. Information

Outcomes of COP26

- 2.1 The UK Government wanted COP26 to keep the 1.5C trajectory of the Paris Agreement "alive" and arguably it has achieved this, although significant challenges remain.
- 2.2 On an international scale, the reception to the '[Glasgow Climate Pact](#)' has been mixed. Without doubt it has reinforced the need for action, and there have been new agreements (by 30 countries comprising 85% of the world's forests) to stop deforestation by 2030, an agreement to cut methane by 30% by 2030, 40 countries to "shift away" from coal, and the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net-Zero (GFANZ) represents over \$130trn in assets under

management. On transport there have been pledges by companies to move to zero-emission vehicles, and on aviation to develop a decarbonisation target that is pre-2050, to which 18 nations have signed up, including the USA.

- 2.3 However, the results of COP26 and the Glasgow Climate Pact are divisive. The deal stretches nations on topics like coal and finance more than they have been before – despite the last-minute intervention from India to weaken the text on coal from ‘phase-out’ to ‘phase-down’. Yet many highlight that the mechanisms agreed are not sufficient to combat the most severe climate-related risks. The Glasgow Climate Pact is historic in that it marks a truly uncomfortable transition for those lagging, and yet research suggests that the 1.5C ambition of the Paris Agreement, while under threat, is still achievable.

Implications of COP26

- 2.4 In the national coverage of COP26, the role of local Government has been underplayed. There have been estimates that local government is directly responsible for delivering 32% of the emissions reductions needed in the UK and is able to influence 82% of the whole UK total¹. However, there was little focus at COP26 on how to deliver reductions at the local level, and perhaps an over-focus on technology solutions over behavioural measures. Local government needs the resources and powers to deliver its part of the net zero challenge, starting with the development of net zero proofed policies and a pipeline of investment ready programmes and projects.
- 2.5 With 1.5C under threat and many are looking to the local public, private, third and community sectors to intervene. Trillions are needed to combat the climate crisis and to support low-income nations. Developed nations failed to meet the \$100bn finance target, which has now been renegotiated to be delivered through to 2025, and there is no guarantee that this target won’t be missed again. Policymakers and negotiators are looking to the local public and private sectors to transform the net-zero movement.
- 2.6 With some nations set to renege on mechanisms included in the Pact, local government, businesses, and communities need to become a unified driver of the net-zero movement. In his COP26 speech, the Chancellor indicated that the UK is moving towards making it mandatory for firms to publish clear, deliverable decarbonisation and transition plans. Through their actions, businesses, local government and communities can be the driving force to unleash innovation across low-carbon markets and society, around a unifying message: “Sustainability and net-zero needs to be inevitable”.

West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan: First Priorities

- 2.7 The Combined Authority has declared a climate emergency and committed the region to be net zero carbon by 2038 at the latest, with significant progress by 2030.

¹ Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener, HM Government, October 2021

- 2.8 The West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan 2021-2024 (the Plan), published October 2021, is the Mayor's and Combined Authority's response to addressing the climate emergency and delivering mayoral pledges relating to climate, environment and the green economy. It demonstrates how the region can go further and faster than national government, reinforcing commitments to be net zero carbon by 2038 at the latest, protecting and recovering nature and growing the green economy
- 2.9 The Plan has been developed to deliver a net zero carbon region with thriving nature, people and places that are climate ready. This means:
- homes that are healthy and affordable;
 - workplaces that more energy efficient;
 - energy supply that is local, clean and flexible;
 - a sustainable, integrated, and low emission transport system;
 - a rich, diverse, and improved natural environment; and
 - places and people that are ready and resilient to a changing climate.
- 2.10 Of the themes, proposals and critical actions set out in the Plan, the proposed first priorities for the next three years are:

Leadership

- Require funding under our control to show how it is addressing carbon emissions and environmental impacts.
- Require scheme promoters seeking Combined Authority funding to account for and mitigate their emissions, environmental impacts and tackle the climate emergency.
- Develop and deliver a plan to manage the environmental impact of the Combined Authority, decarbonise Combined Authority operations and become a net zero business by 2038 at the latest.
- Monitor and evaluate our organisational and regional progress to ensure we are on track to meet the targets that we have set and to accelerate action where progress is off-track.

Cross-cutting

- Deliver communications and engagement with a focus on how partners, businesses and residents of West Yorkshire can work together to benefit from tackling the climate emergency.
- Build on existing relationships to develop programmes and partnerships that ensure the region has the workforce and jobs that it needs to enable a transition to a sustainable net-zero carbon economy.
- Bring together existing funding and leverage partner and private capital to release new green finance to accelerate delivery through the Net Zero Region Accelerator Programme.

Transport

- Accelerate the delivery of the West Yorkshire Connectivity Infrastructure Plan to reduce private vehicle use, increase active travel and public transport use and decarbonise transport.
- Accelerate the deployment of electric vehicle charging points across the region through funding and partnerships and utilise the Mayor's devolved powers with a focus on ensuring equity in provision.
- Develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan which sets the ambition for the future of bus services regardless of the regulatory framework and includes activity such as the decarbonisation of the bus network and encouraging modal shift.
- Deliver neighbourhood programmes that change the infrastructure and support communities in favour of walking, cycling and high quality, green and climate ready public realm for people.

Homes

- Establish a Better Homes Yorkshire Hub, chaired by the Mayor, and Standard for better, net zero neighbourhoods. Delivering a step change and scale up of new and existing home improvement solutions for healthy, affordable, efficient and net zero homes across all tenures.

Business and industry

- Build on the success of our existing business support programmes supporting businesses to become sustainable, decarbonise and circular in the way they operate.

Energy

- Develop, in partnership, Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) for the region that meet the needs of our communities, businesses and enable the transition to a clean and zero carbon energy system.
- Identify the locations and accelerate the deployment of low carbon energy solutions, for example heat pumps and heat networks, solar and smart flexible technologies, to decarbonise heat and power.

Natural environment

- Work with partners to produce a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- Support partners including the White Rose Forest, Yorkshire Water, National Trust, Moors for the Future, South Pennines Park, local authorities and community groups to restore nature and landscapes, plant trees and improve biodiversity.
- Establish a grants programme for community led projects including greening and river conservation and improvement, and sustainable food growing.

Climate ready

- Work with the Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (YRFCC), the Environment Agency and other partners to deliver enhanced flood protection, incorporating natural flood management, and climate resilience to communities, homes and businesses.

Net Zero Region Accelerator

- 2.11 Of the finance required to deliver the West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan, so far £800,000 has been committed by the Combined Authority to a Net Zero Region Accelerator programme. The scheme is part of the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan, and aims to boost jobs in the low carbon sector, restore nature, tackle the air quality and climate emergency.
- 2.12 The programme will run to March 2024 and deliver the following outputs:
- Pipeline of climate and environment programmes and projects that are ready to attract the investment and funding required to take them through the project delivery phases to implementation.
 - ‘No regrets’ programmes being worked up include Better Homes Yorkshire housing retrofit and home improvement, decarbonisation of heat and power for buildings and transport, nature-based solutions for the climate, communities and environment, and business sustainability.
 - Investment prospectus to showcase the region’s green investment potential and a portfolio of opportunities to make West Yorkshire a very attractive place to invest.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 The Combined Authority’s approach to tackling the climate emergency is set out in the West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan. The COP26 Glasgow Climate Pact positively supports the objectives and proposals for action in the plan, particularly through the Pact’s priorities for: science and urgency; adaptation; mitigation; finance; technology; capacity-building; loss and damage reverse; implementation.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 It is crucial that transitioning to a net zero carbon economy reduces inequality in West Yorkshire. It cannot be the cause of further inequality for our most excluded and deprived groups and communities. We also need to grasp the opportunities for better jobs and quality of life that can be achieved through the transition to a net zero carbon economy. Inclusive growth goals and outcomes will be included in the detailed design, delivery and evaluation of the priorities identified in section 2.10.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 Transitioning to a net zero carbon economy should be equitable and not be at the expense of any groups or communities. To that extent equality and

diversity implications and solutions will be cross cutting and integrated into the detailed development and delivery of the priorities.

- 5.2 The need for all people living, working and studying in West Yorkshire to be involved in the responses to tackling the climate emergency is clear, and all groups and communities need to be involved in climate decision making.
- 5.3 COP26 energised the need for peoples, local communities and civil society, including youth and children, in addressing and responding to climate change, and highlighting the urgent need for multilevel and cooperative action. We have an opportunity to build on this moment, engaging with and supporting local communities to act.
- 5.4 All proposals to deliver the priorities identified will be subject to Equality Impact Assessments, and there will be equality and diversity dimensions to all key performance indicators and outcomes to ensure progress is being made and inequalities are not widened.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The actions identified in the Plan will need to be appropriately resourced with the right capital and revenue investment and investment in skills and capacity to lead these actions. Delivery will therefore require ongoing, targeted investment and an aligned financial policy and decision-making process.
- 6.2 The Mayor is committing to bring forward a Climate and Environment Fund and to securing the funding needed for the actions for the Combined Authority. The Combined Authority will work with partner local authorities to design the delivery mechanisms for this fund.
- 6.3. The finance required for the three-year Plan is £85 million of direct funding and investment and nearly £600 million in grants and loans for households and businesses. Financial investment will be through a mix of sources including the Combined Authority in partnership with public and private funding. Work is ongoing to identify potential funding sources, including the Single Investment Fund. Decisions on the use of local funding will need to be taken considering no new national funding coming to local government after the Comprehensive Spending Review to support this work.
- 6.4 Achieving net zero, nature recovery and climate ready resilience will deliver substantial financial savings to the region, both at an individual and organisational levels. For example, large savings are likely to be made through fuel cost reductions that occur because of efficiency improvements across buildings and industry and the transition from petrol and diesel to electric vehicles.

7. Legal Implications

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

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct staff implications arising directly from this report. However, additional posts will be required across Combined Authority directorates and teams working on this agenda, alongside new capacity and capabilities from our partners and stakeholders to deliver priority programmes and projects resulting from the Plan and Net Zero Region Accelerator.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 Extensive stakeholder consultation was undertaken to inform the development of actions to include in the Plan.
- 9.2 West Yorkshire local authorities and the Combined Authority's Climate, Energy and Environment Committee have been consulted in developing the content of the Plan, including Leaders and Chief Executives.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 The Combined Authority notes the progress made at COP26 and implications for the approach to achieving a net zero carbon West Yorkshire economy.
- 10.2 The Combined Authority endorses the first priorities from the West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan identified at section 2.10 and agrees to delegate, if required, any final changes to the Managing Director in consultation with the Mayor.
- 10.3 The Combined Authority agrees to work with partner local authorities to design the delivery mechanisms, and to identify and secure funding for a Climate and Environment Fund to support delivery of the Plan.

11. Background Documents

West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan
<https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/7382/west-yorkshire-climate-and-environment-plan.pdf>

12. Appendices

None.