

Report to: Climate, Energy & Environment Committee

Date: 4 October 2022

Subject: **Pledge Delivery Update**

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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an overview of selected ongoing activity to deliver against the mayoral pledge to tackle the climate emergency.

1. Information

Background

- 1.1 The Mayor has several pledges which she would like to see delivered against during her term in office. One of these pledges is related to tackling the climate emergency.
- 1.2 This report summarises selected activity that is currently taking place to deliver against the pledge. It represents activity from across the eight themes on which the West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan is framed.

Net Zero Region Accelerator

Overview

- 1.3 The Net Zero Region Accelerator (NZRA) programme addresses an identified barrier to the progression of net-zero projects, the ability for project sponsors to create robust business cases and investment models that address issues of

scale, longevity and confidence that can attract private finance. It also aims to address the issue that there are insufficient investment-ready projects in a single coordinated pipeline.

1.4 The programme aims to:

- Reduce carbon emissions
- Deliver wider societal benefits
- Increase investment in and funding for net-zero projects
- Grow the green economy
- Demonstrate climate leadership

1.5 To address these barriers the programme will:

- Establish a pipeline of net-zero projects for West Yorkshire.
- Launch a net-zero Investment Prospectus that acts as a 'shop window' to the investment community for net-zero projects in West Yorkshire.

1.6 Where a project requires additional support to progress to a full developed business case, the programme can provide dedicated staff and grant funding for specialist consultancy work.

1.7 The focus of the programme is energy, buildings and nature projects and it is anticipated that projects such as residential and commercial retrofit, renewable energy generation and peatland restoration will be supported.

Progress to date

1.8 The structures for the smooth operation of the programme have been established e.g. Programme Board and officers are currently working with West Yorkshire local authorities and key partners to identify and bring forward projects that could be supported through the programme and included on the pipeline and in the Prospectus.

1.9 In parallel to the identification of projects officers have also begun conversations with potential financiers to ensure there is a strong portfolio of finance solutions to accompany the Prospectus.

1.10 A commission is currently out to the market to procure a web platform to host the Prospectus. It is the intention for a preferred supplier to be in place by October with the Prospectus to be launched in February 2023.

1.11 The programme is currently in early-stage dialogue with several project sponsors to provide support for schemes and through these conversations has already facilitated microgrid and smart local energy system feasibility studies. It is anticipated that this work will lead to the identification of projects for inclusion on the programme pipeline.

Green Smart Community Integrated Energy Systems

Overview

- 1.12 The Green Smart Community Integrated Energy Systems (GreenSCIES) project is funded by Innovate UK. It aims to undertake feasibility for Smart Local Energy Systems (SLES) that integrate the supply, storage and use of multiple forms of energy at the local scale.
- 1.13 The objective of the project is to investigate the practicality, economics, carbonomics and wider benefits of implementing an integrated SLES by:
 - Evaluating sites where waste heat could be captured as a source of thermal energy; and
 - Integrating UKIB into project development as an advisor and delivering early financial structuring support to enable rapid deployment of study recommendations.
- 1.14 Taking a SLES approach enables a clean, cost-effective and flexible approach to local energy provision to be delivered. It can also deliver additional benefits in the form of better air quality and improved health and wellbeing for communities.
- 1.15 GreenSCIES has successfully delivered projects in Islington, Barnsley and Smethwick to date and has secured further funding to deliver a further five projects.

Progress to date

- 1.16 The NZRA programme team have been approached to support the identification of sites in West Yorkshire that might be suitable for funding and have worked with West Yorkshire local authorities to identify a shortlist of locations.
- 1.17 Two schemes have been identified in West Yorkshire for progression through GreenSCIES. Both are Spatial Priority Areas (SPAs), one in Wakefield and the other straddling the border between Kirklees and Calderdale.
- 1.18 Feasibility studies in the two locations will take place over a three-to-four-month period with completion expected in February 2023. The works would result in concept design of an integrated low carbon smart local energy system; with the final output consisting of a feasibility report which it is anticipated would include the following:
 - Heat maps overlaid by solar PV and EV opportunities.
 - Techno-economic models and assessments of an integrated local energy system.
 - Benefits analysis (carbon, costs and co-benefits).
 - Recommendations for deployment.

- 1.19 The final outputs will be shared with Innovate UK, the Combined Authority and the respective local authorities.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain

Overview

- 1.20 The Environment Act 2021 includes a provision for a new system of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). The Combined Authority has provisionally agreed to act as the responsible authority for the development of the West Yorkshire LNRS, which will include playing a leading role in coordinating resources and existing partnerships (public, private and voluntary sectors).
- 1.21 LNRSs are a new, England-wide system of spatial strategic that will establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery, and provide wider environmental benefits.
- 1.22 Regarding Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), the Environment Act 2021 requires BNG outcomes from a development to be quantified in the form of Biodiversity Units, with a minimum of 10% BNG being achieved. This can be achieved through the following routes:
- On-site
 - Off-site, including via a habitat bank (an area of land managed to enhance its ecological value, with the purpose of providing Biodiversity Units)
 - A mixture of on and off-site delivery
 - Via purchase of 'biodiversity credits' from the Secretary of State.
- 1.23 BNG delivers measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats through the planning process, with a minimum 10% uplift in biodiversity value being achieved. Where off-site biodiversity delivery is required, this is most appropriately achieved via Habitat Banks which fund habitat creation and positive land management intended to compensate for unavoidable environmental impact caused by approved development.
- 1.24 The WY LNRS has potential alignment opportunities with BNG requirements, which is key to ensuring investment from the development sector can be directed to the areas which will benefit the greatest.

Progress to date

- 1.25 Formal appointment of responsible authorities for the development of LNRS's is expected in the coming months following publication of LNRS Regulations and Guidance by DEFRA.
- 1.26 The requirement for a governance structure, including the establishment of a Steering Group, for the development of the WY LNRS has been identified based on the experience from the pilot areas for LNRS. This is likely to utilise

the existing Yorkshire West Local Nature Partnership as the Steering Group, however this is yet to be confirmed.

- 1.27 With regard to BNG, WY Partner Councils commissioned private Consultants WSP to produce a Report to understand the technical and resource implications of implementing new BNG responsibilities through the planning process, including appraising options for the delivery of off-site biodiversity units.
- 1.28 District officers are exploring the option to establish a WY Habitat Bank (a recommendation of the WSP Report), through a more detailed review of the availability and suitability of relevant land. The WY BNG Steering Group are currently considering the most appropriate route to undertake this endorsed approach.

Green skills and jobs

Overview

- 1.29 There are a range of estimates for the number of green jobs required to support West Yorkshire's transition to net-zero by 2038, each in the tens of thousands. Despite seeing growth in demand over time, with a particularly strong upward trend since 2020, only 2% of online job postings in West Yorkshire in the 2021 calendar year had green skills requirements. This is similar to the national average.
- 1.30 The Mayor has pledged to create 1,000 well paid, skilled, green jobs for young people, supporting progress against the Combined Authority's commitment to a net zero carbon economy for West Yorkshire by 2038.

Progress to date

- 1.31 So far, over 900 green jobs have been pledged by businesses in West Yorkshire. Businesses are being supported by existing employment and skills programmes, and work is in progress to explore how support could be furthered or continued by programmes currently in development using Gainshare funding.
- 1.32 The Mayor has established a Green Jobs Task Force which will collectively set out a strategic approach underpinned by deliverable actions that will contribute to the greening of the economy through skills and jobs. The Task Force has commissioned research to support the development of evidence-led recommendations. These are expected to be presented at the next meeting on 4th October.
- 1.33 Whilst young people are passionate about climate change, research by Ahead Partnership suggests that young people have low levels of awareness of how the net zero agenda impacts jobs and career opportunities and have low levels of visibility of the jobs available and the skills required for jobs in industries such as energy, transport, construction, utilities and infrastructure.

- 1.34 The Combined Authority has commissioned a West Yorkshire Green Skills Youth Programme between July and October 2022 to meaningfully engage with young people to gain their views and support them to articulate clear recommendations for action. The programme will consist of:
- An online brief launch with inspirational role models from the green sector.
 - A half-day activity that will train and support young people to understand greening topics such as carbon offsetting, environmental investment and green living, create their own ideas for a local green project and take part in a Youth Voice session to have their say on the future of green jobs in West Yorkshire.
 - An opportunity to share their green project ideas with WYCA.
- 1.35 Young people will be supported to present their experiences back to the Green Jobs Task Force at their meeting on 4th October. Their findings will support the development of recommendations made by the Task Force in January 2023, and the development of the next phase of the Mayoral Green Jobs Gateway.

Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) and Community Renewal Fund (CRF) Retrofit Hub

Overview

- 1.36 Research has found that over a million homes in West Yorkshire contribute to nearly a third of carbon emissions related to buildings in the region. Measures are currently being delivered to reduce carbon emissions arising from household properties.
- 1.37 SHDF Wave 1 is targeting properties that have an EPC rating of D or lower (E, F, G) and deliver retrofit improvements to achieve an EPC-C rating. The priority are measures that insulate the property first to reduce energy consumption supported with the installation of renewable energy sources such as solar where appropriate.
- 1.38 Wave 1 of the SHDF was approved in January 2022 to deliver £10.38m of retrofit improvements to Social Housing across West Yorkshire. This would improve 1316 properties working with 9 Registered Social Housing Providers. Match funding by the Providers of 30% was a pre-requisite by BEIS however the Providers successfully raised 50% match funding for Wave 1.
- 1.39 The CRF Retrofit Hub is to deliver 100 whole house retrofit plans which also include providing residents with energy advice and support. This scheme will also result in the creation of an architectural toolkit of retrofit designs and streetscape plans demonstrating what internal and external modifications, that could be made to properties that have been surveyed. In addition to this, up to 40 adult learners will be supported through the offer of free training to provide

them with the skills, technical knowledge and experience needed to work in the growing green sector.

- 1.40 The CRF Retrofit Hub project is focussed on the Manningham and Toller wards of Bradford and aims to understand the challenges there are in retrofitting traditional stone built properties in conservation areas using the CRF funding of £0.46m in a very tight delivery window (originally from 1 December 2021 to 30 June 2022 – see para 2.42 below).

Progress to date

- 1.41 The SHDF Wave 1 programme has currently delivered 335 installations against a forecast at this point in the programme of 165. There is a time lag in getting the properties re-surveyed to confirm the EPC ratings and currently 60 properties have received the required EPC-C certificate against a forecast of 65. Trustmark - who process the assessment and award the certificates - are currently processing an outstanding 275 installations.
- 1.42 The CRF Retrofit Hub has had a delivery extension approval to 31 October 2022. This was due to challenges of completing the community engagement during Ramadan and then purdah for the local elections. As part of the extension the number of whole house retrofit plans was increased to 150.
- 1.43 To date, 122 whole house surveys have been completed, and 75 decarbonisation plans posted to the householders. The Retrofit Coordinator is arranging calls with the residents to discuss the outcomes of the survey that has been undertaken on their properties.
- 1.44 The progress for the CRF Retrofit Hub delivery of adult learners has been very challenging. Currently five learners have completed the course, with the final cohort of students expected to enrol onto the Retrofit module from w/c 26 September 2022 at Harrogate College.
- 1.45 A series of online assets to educate and encourage young learners to consider roles in the green economy, along with resources educating the community on the climate emergency declaration have been published on the FutureGoals webpage and accessed well.

Resource Efficient Business

Overview

- 1.46 The Resource Efficient Business (REBiz) programme supports small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) to identify opportunities to save resources, energy and carbon. The programme launched in January 2020 and, in addition to offering a free resource efficiency audit, provides grant funding of 40% of eligible project costs up to a maximum grant of £40,000. REBiz also offers fully funded consultancy support to SMEs that are interested in developing circular economy products, processes or business models.

- 1.47 REBiz is part funded by the European Regional Development Fund under Investment Priority 4b (Promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy use in enterprises) and covers the five West Yorkshire District, Craven, Harrogate, Selby and York. It is primarily focused on carbon emissions reduction. Support activity ends on the programme on 31 March 2023.
- 1.48 The core objective of REBiz is to help SMEs to overcome the barriers to investment in energy and resource efficiency and the circular economy: primarily lack of knowledge and understanding, lack of capacity, and access to finance.
- 1.49 REBiz aims to support at least 237 businesses with a minimum of 12 hours of advice and support or a grant of at least £1,000. The programme is also targeting greenhouse emissions reductions of 2,064t CO₂e per annum.

Progress to date

- 1.50 Despite being severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 600 business have engaged with the REBiz programme (as at 31 August 2022), with 199 receiving 12 hours of support and/or a grant. More than 270 SMEs have received a free audit providing valuable advice on how they can reduce their resource use and costs. Greenhouse gas emissions reductions currently stand at 2,029t CO₂e per annum. 73 businesses have engaged specifically with the circular economy pilot, and 41 of these have had at least 2 days of diagnostic support and advice.
- 1.51 81 grants are pending or have already been approved, with a value of over £1 million. In terms of additional benefits to SMEs this equates to over 4.5 million kWh of electricity and over 2 million kWh of gas savings, saving businesses at least £750,000 per annum (NB with current energy costs this figure is likely to be massively understated). There has been significant interest in heating and LED lighting, and more recently in renewable energy generation through solar PV.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy

Overview

- 1.52 The UK Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy was published in March 2022 setting out the government's approach to delivering charging infrastructure to 2030 to remove charging infrastructure barriers and accelerate the pace of adoption. The strategy sets out a requirement for local authorities to develop local chargepoint strategies.
- 1.53 The West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan 2021 – 2024 set a commitment to accelerate the deployment of electric vehicle charging points across the region with a focus on ensuring equity in provision. A range of public EV charging infrastructure schemes have already been delivered by the Combined Authority and our Partners, includes the ULEV taxi scheme, delivering over 100 charging points for taxis and public use, alongside

additional schemes to deliver public charging at sites across the region such as council owned car parks.

- 1.54 The strategy will set out the aims, objectives and principles for investment for electric vehicle infrastructure in West Yorkshire and include an action plan for infrastructure delivery. The purpose of the document is to guide investment decisions for future funding opportunities as well as provide design guidance for electric vehicle chargepoints to ensure provision meets the needs of those who live and work in West Yorkshire, and ensure equity of access across region.
- 1.55 It is vital that the West Yorkshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy aligns with the principles of our Transport Strategy and daughter documents, specifically to support the transition to electric vehicles while also encourage modal shift away from private car use. As such the strategy will include consideration of electric shared transport opportunities alongside charging for private vehicles.

Progress to date

- 1.56 Work is underway with district partners on the development of a West Yorkshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy. A number of workstreams support the work of a West Yorkshire strategy:
- An **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy Working Group** has been established which includes officer membership from each of our district partners, and provides a forum for strategy develop, informed by existing district policies, projects and EV aspirations.
 - A **technical study** on the potential for EV charging infrastructure was commissioned by the West Yorkshire Low Emission Strategy Delivery Group. This study focused on demand forecasting, strategic investment priorities and early infrastructure deliverables.
 - **Transport for the North** have developed an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Framework which includes an evidence base and visualisation tool for use by TfN and partners to assess electric vehicle charging infrastructure requirements.
 - **City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS)** contains funding for a number of EV infrastructure schemes, including charging points in residential areas through the decarbonisation pilot programme, and in EV charging for car clubs and e-bike charging through the integrated and shared transport.

Zero Emission Buses

Overview

- 1.57 As part of regional commitments to delivering against the climate emergency, the Combined Authority has established an ambition to have a zero-emission bus fleet by 2036 and to have made significant progress towards this by 2030. Currently only 2% of the bus fleet in West Yorkshire is zero emission.

- 1.58 The Combined Authority submitted a successful business case bid proposal to the Department for Transport for their Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) fund in January 2022. The scheme, as part of the West Yorkshire Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) programme, will reduce emissions from the region's bus fleet, contributing to the regional target to be net-zero carbon by 2038. The scheme supports the delivery of the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy 2040 and the Bus Service Improvement Plan by helping to deliver a comprehensive electric vehicle charging network, working with bus operators to move to a near-to-zero emissions bus fleet, and supporting improvements in bus fleets to attract new customers.
- 1.59 The West Yorkshire Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) scheme is the first phase of three that will introduce electric zero emission buses and necessary charging infrastructure. This scheme will:
- Introduce 111 new electric buses to routes in Bradford, Leeds and Wakefield, to compliment separate planned schemes in Calderdale and Kirklees. This will bring the percentage of zero-emission buses in the fleet from 2% to 10%.
 - Install electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the bus depots where the zero emission buses will be based.

Progress to date

- 1.60 Work is underway with operators and the Department for Transport on the the early stages of scheme delivery. In Bradford and Wakefield districts these will be the first of their type serving passengers in these areas. In Leeds, the zero emission buses will complement those already operating in the district. Phase two will focus on Calderdale and Kirklees and will introduce electric buses onto tendered routes as part of a separate scheme. A final phase 3 project to the ZEB Programme is in the early stages of project planning.

Flood Risk Management

Overview

- 1.61 The Combined Authority is working with partners including the Environment Agency, West and North Yorkshire Local Authorities, Yorkshire Water and the 3rd sector (charities and volunteering groups) to accelerate delivery of flood risk management across the region. This includes developing business cases and programme development for flood schemes and working in partnership to deliver innovation.

Progress to date

- 1.62 The Natural Flood Management Programme (including 9 schemes) is included within the portfolio of proposals seeking CEP Wave 1 funding, as outlined at Item 8 of this agenda.

- 1.63 The Combined Authority is also collaborating with the West Yorkshire Flood Innovation Programme (FLIP) to accelerate and deliver innovation across a range of flood management themes including the acceleration of business cases and feasibility studies. Funding for a package FLIP research and innovation workstreams have been included in the Authority's UK Share Prosperity Fund proposal. Subject to Government approval, they will commence delivery over 2022/23 and 23/24.
- 1.64 The Capital Infrastructure Flood Programme includes 26 schemes with a total capital value of over £250m and a £51m funding gap. The Combined Authority is working with delivery partners to identify how this programme could be funded, phased and identify any 'shovel ready' proposals prior to business case development.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 The activity outlined in this report is directly linked to the West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan and will assist in addressing the climate emergency and meeting net-zero carbon in the region.

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. Furthermore, opportunities for better jobs and quality of life need to be embedded within the transition to net-zero carbon and sustainable economy.
- 4.2 Inclusive growth goals and outcomes are considered within the items that are included in this paper.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 Meeting net-zero carbon and 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 are cross-cutting and integrated across the items outlined in this report to ensure no one is adversely affected.

6. Financial Implications

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

7. Legal Implications

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

8. Staffing Implications

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

9. External Consultees

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the Committee note the contents of this report.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

None.