

**Report to:** Climate, Energy & Environment Committee

**Date:** 10 January 2022

**Subject:** **Pledge Delivery Update**

**Director:** Liz Hunter, Director Policing, Environment and Place.

**Author:** Noel Collings, Head of Energy and Environment Policy

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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. Where updates have been provided as part of other agenda items this information has not been duplicated.

## 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

#### Progress to date

- 1.3 Review meetings with several, but not all of the districts have taken place, this has generated renewed interest and several potential projects have been

added to the provisional pipeline with one application for funding received and a further two being worked up.

- 1.4 A procurement exercise for a supplier to develop the WYCA Net Zero Prospectus was undertaken; this received 7 bids. However, upon assessment none of the submitted bids were suitable to award. A new procurement exercise is underway with the aim of appointing a supplier early in Q1.

### **Green Smart Community Integrated Energy Systems**

#### Progress to date

- 1.5 Two study sites have been selected from within West Yorkshire, one in Wakefield and one on the border with Calderdale and Kirklees. Both schemes are progressing well with multiple opportunities being identified and modelling currently underway. Reports for the two feasibility studies should be available in Q1.

### **Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain**

#### Overview

- 1.6 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).
- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 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.

- 1.10 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.
- 1.11 DEFRA continues to develop the national policy framework with the aim to begin roll out of LNRS in April 2023. A vital part of that framework are the LNRS Regulations and Guidance, which are not yet available. Natural England LNRS regional training for responsible authorities is scheduled for early 2023.
- 1.12 A further £32,500 Local Capacity Seed Funding Grant is being made available to support capacity-building.

#### Progress to date

- 1.13 Ahead of the publication of the Regulations and Guidance and to prepare WY's approach, governance options are being developed in collaboration with Natural England and will be presented at a future meeting.

### **Resource Efficient Business**

#### Progress to date

- 1.14 REBiz has engaged with c550 SMEs, providing resource efficiency audits to 272 by the end of October. At 31 October, 217 businesses had received a grant or at least 12 hours support, and progress is on target. Carbon saving targets have already been exceeded with nearly 2,400 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per annum, and this is on course to exceed 3,000 t.
- 1.15 The business sustainability programme that will replace REBiz was approved at the Combined Authority on 8 December 2022, and work is commencing on implementation.
- 1.16 As part of this programme, the Energy Price Emergency Grants fund launched on 8 December and will provide £1 million of grant support to 250-350 businesses with less than 50 staff to implement energy saving measures to address the cost of doing business crisis.

### **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy**

- 1.17 Update included as part of Low Emission Vehicle Strategy Item.

### **Zero Emission Buses**

#### Progress to date

- 1.18 The Zero Emission Bus Programme currently in delivery will help to increase this to closer to between 14% and 19%. This programme includes:

- Phase 1: £56.2million project to introduce 111 zero emission buses and charging on routes in Bradford, Leeds, and Wakefield districts funded through Department for Transport's Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) funding.
  - Phase 2: £4 million project to introduce 8 zero emission buses and charging to routes in Calderdale and Kirklees funded through Gain Share, with a focus on exploring the impact of hilly landscape on the running of electric buses, and how the Combined Authority can work with smaller operators running tendered services to encourage a switch to zero emission buses.
  - Phase 3: £21million project to introduce between 60 and 126 zero emission buses and charging (number of vehicles subject to delivery model). This will be funded through City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS).
- 1.19 Delivery of Phase 1, the ZEBRA scheme, is now underway with bus operators, planned for completion in 2024. Additionally, work is ongoing to plan for transition the remaining fleet to zero emission vehicles, looking at delivery models and funding approaches alongside our franchising work.

### **Flood Risk Management**

#### Progress to date

- 1.20 Natural Flood Management (NFM) Programme: A £7.1m programme comprising 9 schemes has been agreed with partners and was approved for CEP Wave 1 funding.
- 1.21 The programme has potential to deliver over 4,000 NFM interventions including leaky dams, storage ponds and remaindering (naturalising) watercourses. The schemes will support wider work to deliver flood resilience at a catchment scale alongside capital flood infrastructure schemes. The programme will also align with work to enhance biodiversity and support carbon sequestration.
- 1.22 Partners are now developing the project businesses cases. It is anticipated that these will be approved on a rolling basis from Spring 2023 onwards with delivery commencing thereafter.
- 1.23 Capital infrastructure Flood Programme: A £250m programme including 24 infrastructure schemes. The package of schemes have the potential to provide enhanced flood protection to 3,600 homes and 2,800 businesses. Additional investment of £61m is needed to deliver the full programme across all phases.
- 1.24 The programme received approval at Strategic Assessment stage in November 2022. Work is now ongoing with partners to consider how additional funding for the programme can be identified.

## **Solar PV & Storage Programme**

### **Overview**

- 1.25 This Programme forms part of the Wave 1 Actions to tackle the Climate and Environment Plan. The Combined Authority is working with the District partners and the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership to develop an array of solar PV and storage initiatives.

### **Progress to date**

- 1.26 Several Schemes have been developed through the solar and storage task and finish group following established green book long to short listing processes. The following schemes have been moved forward into development.
- Install 233 kW of solar on eight of the Combined Authority's bus stations by July 2023.
  - 50 x Solar on Schools (or other community buildings) installations by December 2023.
  - West Yorkshire Housing Partnership 1,000 – 2,000 solar and battery systems by December 2024.
  - Launch a collective group-buying scheme for West Yorkshire residents by March 2024.
  - Establish a funding pot to support feasibility studies and business case development, with the aim of developing a pipeline of medium to large-scale solar projects in the region by March 2024.

## **Hydrogen Strategy**

- 1.27 Update included as part of Low Emission Vehicle Strategy Item.

### **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.