

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CLIMATE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 30 JULY 2024 AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1,
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS, LS1 2DE**

Present:

Councillor Scott Patient (Chair)	Calderdale Council
Councillor Sarah Ferriby	Bradford Council
Councillor Katie Dye	Leeds City Council
Councillor Jack Hemingway	Wakefield Council
Councillor Jenny Kent	York Council
John Clark	Private Sector Representative
Gideon Richards	Private Sector Representative
Adam Ashman	Advisory Representative (Yorkshire Water)
Martyn Broadest	Advisory Representative (West Yorkshire Housing Partnership)
Jenny Cooke	Advisory Representative (The Environment Agency)
Councillor Barry Anderson	Chair, Scrutiny Committee

In attendance:

Liz Hunter (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Jo Barham (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sophie Brook (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Peter Glover (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Alison Gillespie (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sonya Midgley (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Tawanda Mukombiwa (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Oluwafemi Omoniyi (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Guilherme Rodrigues (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Adam Hunt (Committee Services)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jane Scullion (Calderdale Council), Munir Ahmed (Kirklees Council), Jenny Kent (City of York Council), private sector representatives Jane Atkinson (West Yorkshire Business Board), Richard Goodfellow, David Owumi and advisory representatives, Gregg Dodd (Northern Gas Networks) and Ian Holmes (West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board).

2. Motion to Appoint a Chair of the Meeting

Before the formal business of the Committee commenced, the Director of Policing, Environment, and Place advised the Committee that both the Chair, Councillor Scullion, and the Deputy Chair, Jane Atkinson, were unable to attend the meeting. Councillor Patient was invited to chair the meeting due to his long-standing membership of the Committee.

Resolved: The Committee endorsed the recommendation that Councillor Patient chair the meeting. The motion was unanimously agreed and formally endorsed by local authority members.

3. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests given at the meeting.

4. Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no agenda items present on the agenda which required the exclusion of the public and press.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 May 2024

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting of the Climate, Energy and Environment Committee held on 28 May 2024 were approved as a correct record.

6. Chair's Update

The Chair reflected on the outcome of the recent General Election and its implications. The Chair reported that the Mayor had undertaken numerous meetings relating to climate with ministers since the election, with new announcements concerning planning forthcoming. The Chair highlighted the importance of the Mayor's involvement in these conversations and stated that the committee would be updated on proposed Bills through the House of Commons once more information was available from the Government. The Chair emphasised the need to ensure that the committee's objectives for the climate, energy and environment and net zero targets were met. At the last Combined Authority meeting, there was a focus on climate-based projects and considerations around the Assurance Framework and early implications from recent developments in the House of Commons.

The Chair noted that these initial steps, along with indications of deeper devolution settlements for existing Combined Authorities and greater flexibilities with integrated settlements for Mayoral Combined Authorities, were promising. Additionally, there were commitments to strengthen relationships between the Prime Minister and elected leaders. These measures would create conditions for significant progress in achieving the net zero target and addressing climate and environmental issues in the region.

7. Governance Arrangements

The Committee considered a report that advised members on the governance arrangements approved by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority at its Annual Meeting on 20 June 2024. The report outlined the establishment and terms of reference for the Climate, Energy and Environment Committee, including its quorum and membership details.

Officers introduced the report, noting that the Combined Authority resolved to appoint the Committee with a quorum of three voting members, to include two Combined Authority Members or Local Authority co-optees. Councillor Jane Scullion was appointed as Chair and Jane Atkinson, a West Yorkshire Business Board Member, was appointed as Deputy Chair. The report also set out the committee's scheduled meeting dates for the 2024/25 municipal year

The Chair reported he was pleased to learn about opportunities for informal meetings to take place outside of the formal agreed dates in order to allow the opportunity to explore more deeply the work undertaken by the committee.

Resolved: That the Committee noted the governance arrangements approved by the Combined Authority at the Annual Meeting on 20 June 2024.

8. Monitoring Indicators

The Committee considered a report which presented members with the latest position on the State of the Region monitoring indicators related to climate, energy, and the environment. The report included an updated comparison of carbon emissions against the Carbon Emission Reduction Pathways (CERP) study and detailed key messages from new data, particularly on greenhouse gas emissions and fuel poverty.

Officers highlighted that total greenhouse gas emissions in West Yorkshire fell by 7.4% in 2022, surpassing the national decline of 5.1%. Emissions per capita in West Yorkshire were lower than the England average. Significant reductions were observed in the domestic and public sectors. The submitted report also noted that 25% of West Yorkshire households were in fuel poverty, above the national estimate of 19%. Additionally, 47.1% of new vehicles registered in West Yorkshire were hybrid or electric, compared to 41.3% nationally. The report emphasised ongoing efforts to refine the region's carbon reduction pathway to achieve net zero by 2038.

A presentation was given at the meeting on the Monitoring Indicators.

The Chair noted and highlighted the importance of agriculture and the use of electric vehicles in decarbonisation efforts.

Members appreciated the quality of the data presented and enquired about forecasts for each initiative's contribution to the decarbonisation pathway. Officers mentioned that there was an upcoming workshop in the early autumn to review these forecasts and would be an opportunity for members to further understand the assumptions behind them.

It was emphasised by members the need to consider the transition to electric vehicles and its impact on the domestic energy usage. This particularly related to the potential rise in home electricity consumption due to electric vehicle charging and the importance of understanding home energy usage, including heat pumps and their future increased use by residents.

Members questioned if more could be done to support the electric vehicle market in the Wakefield district. It was noted that not all residents could charge their vehicles at home and understanding the barriers to electric vehicle usage would aid in future projections for electric vehicles.

A member commented that whilst the numbers showed Wakefield trailing behind West Yorkshire, the Council was working towards becoming more sustainable and greener. Members mentioned that there was ongoing work on environmental social governance, with a focus on supply chain improvements and the potential to support private organisations in this regard. Officers confirmed they were collaborating with partners to address issues in the monitoring indicators report.

Resolved: The committee noted the latest intelligence which informed discussions.

9. Programme Priorities

Members considered a report, which provided an overview of the proposed priorities and programme of activities that the Committee would oversee in 2024/25.

The report emphasised the importance of members contributions to the Combined Authority's climate, energy and environment agenda. It highlighted the need for a forward plan of activities likely to be brought before the Committee during this period. Officers introduced the report, outlining the proposed sequence of meetings and key agenda items for 2024/25. The schedule included public and private sessions, with topics such as programme priorities, local growth plans, residential retrofit, transport decarbonisation and the West Yorkshire Strategic Climate and Environment Partnership. The Chair emphasised the need to establish clear parameters for scheduling informal meetings and suggested that one of the meetings should focus on how the committee could influence national government.

Members highlighted the importance of engaging with Scrutiny committees due to the cross-cutting nature throughout the Combined Authority regarding the work discussed at Climate Committee meetings. They stressed the need to be involved with other committees to aid and advise. In response, officers confirmed the possibility of inviting chairs of other relevant committees to informal workshops for the Climate, Energy and Environment Committee.

An advisory representative offered the support of the Environmental Agency concerning the flood work programme. The Chair and officers welcomed and accepted the offer of working with the Environmental Agency regarding the Combined Authority's programme priorities.

Members declared their support for the public engagement initiatives and recognised the potential for improving relationships between Combined Authorities and other local authorities. Officers confirmed the Combined Authority had strong relations with other local Authorities and would look to grow these relations in the future.

Resolved: The Committee noted and endorsed the proposed priorities and programme of activity for 2024/25, subject to any changes arising through discussion.

10. Local Growth Plan

The Committee considered an update report on the Local Growth Plan which presented the agreed version approved by the Combined Authority.

It was noted that the Plan, set for launch in early autumn 2024, aimed to meet the Mayor's Manifesto commitment by addressing productivity, poverty and access to opportunity in West Yorkshire, while capitalising on significant infrastructure opportunities. Members noted its close alignment with the emerging Climate and Environment Plan and that this had ensured sustainability remained central to all activities. Green Economy opportunities were highlighted as a key area.

Members expressed their appreciation for the direction of the strategy and thanked the officers for their efforts. They queried the actions taken by local authorities to ensure alignment with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Officers confirmed they had been collaborating with local authorities when developing local economic strategies. They assured members that there had been an ongoing engagement with local authorities to ensure alignment of priorities across all areas in West Yorkshire.

The Chair commended the inclusivity of the economy detailed in the strategy. Members highlighted the mission on sustainability and queried about the potential for a circular economy. Members pointed out that retrofitting presented a significant economic opportunity within West Yorkshire and officers confirmed that retrofitting was one of their investment priorities. On the topic of the circular economy, officers reported that it had been identified as a strength in their analysis of West Yorkshire, presenting further opportunities for development.

Resolved: The committee noted the content of the Local Growth Plan and provided feedback for a developed narrative to be presented in the autumn.

11. Skills Report

The Committee considered an update report on skills and innovation interventions, focusing on adult skills, career inspiration for young people and the Mayor's Innovation Challenge. The report built on previous updates, emphasised green skills training and the integration of these skills into adult education and employment programs in West Yorkshire.

Officers introduced the report, detailing the delivery of five demand-led

courses in green skills during the 2023/24 academic year. These included training in hybrid vehicle maintenance, heat pump installation and sustainability project management. The report highlighted the Employment West Yorkshire initiative, which piloted green skills activities and detailed collaborations with local authorities and educational institutions to promote green jobs. The report also outlined the Mayor's Innovation Challenge, which aimed to inspire innovation through competitions and awards.

Members highlighted the importance of developing skills and tutors, especially in the electric vehicles industry, as they had noted a skills shortage in tutors for this sector. Officers responded that various options were being explored, including utilising existing skills within the further education sector to address the skills shortage.

Members enquired about better integration of skills within the small and medium-sized enterprises sector. It was noted by members that small and medium-sized enterprises often lacked the time to take on young people. Officers confirmed that they worked closely with small and medium-sized enterprises at career hubs to engage with education strategically and to further understand their needs. Officers announced that a round table with employers would take place in the autumn to address the barriers to entry and mentioned the upcoming Mayor's Graduate Pilot.

It was further enquired by members about monitoring the skills work for younger people to prevent a skills gap and to retain trained individuals. Officers responded that they would maintain momentum and that they would ensure future collaboration with local businesses and schools in West Yorkshire to guarantee longevity in skills and employment.

Members questioned the scalability of projects involving schools. Officers responded that they would manage the West Yorkshire schools career hub and have detailed case studies to support scalability of such projects. Officers highlighted a buddying scheme to remove barriers and share information across the hub for businesses.

The Chair emphasised the role of members in having amplified the work undertaken by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the Mayor to maximise the potential for skills in West Yorkshire.

Resolved:

- (i) The Committee noted the update provided in the submitted report.
- (ii) That Committee members be invited to engage with and promote upcoming activity with primary schools and the Mayor's Innovation Challenge.

12. Home Energy West Yorkshire

The Committee considered an update report on the progress of the Home Energy West Yorkshire programme, previously known as the Better Homes Hub. The report sought approval for the transfer of delegations within the

programme. Housing in West Yorkshire was responsible for 3.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, with the Home Energy WY programme having aimed to enhance home energy efficiency through consensus building, delivering retrofit projects, and establishing a trusted advisory entity.

The Chair advised members of the launch this month of the first two projects under the banner of Home Energy West Yorkshire, the solar collective buying scheme and the low interest retrofit loan.

Members raised concerns about the ethics of sourcing solar panels from regions with known ethical issues and enquired about the existence of a sustainability strategy for procurement. Officers acknowledged these concerns, stating that they were aware of the associated risks and that they would take them into account within projects. Officers also confirmed that ethical issues had been outlined on the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Risk Register and that they were collaborating with the Procurement team to ensure compliance with the Combined Authority's modern slavery statement.

Resolved:

- (i) The committee noted the updates provided in the submitted report.
- (ii) The committee approved the existing delegations and that those listed at 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 of the submitted report be transferred to the newly appointed Head of Service leading on residential retrofit.

13. Transport Decarbonisation

The Committee considered an update report on the progress of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP) in respect of decarbonisation and ongoing related work. The new Mayor's West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan, set for adoption by early 2026, aimed to build on the 2040 West Yorkshire Transport Strategy. The Combined Authority had been developing a vision, objectives and principles for the LTP, which aligned with regional plans such as the West Yorkshire Plan and Mass Transit Vision. Public engagement on the Local Transport Plan and Mass Transit Phase 1 began on 15 July 2023 and focused' on feedback to shape the transport network's future.

Officers highlighted key policy areas for decarbonisation, including the promotion of sustainable travel, transitioning to low and zero-emission vehicles and improvements to digital connectivity. The report emphasised fair and inclusive decarbonisation, which enhanced biodiversity and improved climate resilience. Ongoing workstreams included development of the electric vehicle infrastructure, expansion of zero-emission buses and implementation of active travel funding. Public consultations and stakeholder engagements were planned to refine the LTP policies and interventions before the 2025 statutory consultation.

Members enquired about sustainable travel, sustainable urban drainage and flood risk management. A Yorkshire Water representative noted the use of street spacing and flood risk management considerations. They expressed a willingness to share with the Combined Authority work that Yorkshire Water

had undertaken with councils. An officer emphasised the importance of utilising industry support and accepted the offer to receive advice from Yorkshire Water.

Members welcomed the direction of the report, particularly with regard to public health and air quality zones. Members requested clarity on the benefits and goals of the strategy. Officers highlighted the significance of the public health element in the report and emphasised the importance of having stated the benefits of the strategy to the public.

The Chair explained the critical nature of decisions regarding transport changes and stressed the importance of delivering development plans and to consider this in budget setting. Members recognised the Local Transport Plan as an opportunity to underscore these issues to the residents of West Yorkshire. The need for a collaborative effort with stakeholders to determine appropriate actions was acknowledged by members, with officers having discussed the importance of balancing priorities of residents and managing them effectively in the implementation of the Local Transport Plan.

Resolved: The committee noted the content of the submitted report.

14. West Yorkshire Strategic Climate and Environment Partnership

The Committee considered a report which provided an overview of the West Yorkshire Strategic Climate and Environment Partnership. The report aimed to seek member input on the Partnership's aims, objectives, focus areas and risks.

Officers explained that the Combined Authority had set a target for West Yorkshire to achieve net zero carbon by 2038, 12 years ahead of the national target. This ambitious goal required unprecedented levels of emission reduction interventions. Evidence indicated that nearly 700,000 of the region's 1 million homes needed improved thermal efficiency, with over 650,000 requiring heat pumps. To meet the 2038 target, the Combined Authority was exploring closer private sector relationships through a strategic partnership to enhance the pace and scale of activities.

The Chair expressed gratitude for the work and information provided in the report. He noted its importance in having increased the capacity and expertise in the public sector and that the inclusion of green finance was welcomed.

Members enquired about contingencies for the absence of companies specialising in nature recovery and biodiversity. Officers responded that there was significant interest in future partnerships and emphasised the robustness of the process. They highlighted the intention to maintain a wider network of companies and sought champions in this area. The Chair emphasised the need to maximise partnerships within the industry.

Concerns were raised about the process favouring large companies over smaller organisations and questioned how small and medium enterprises could be engaged in the marketplace. Officers acknowledged that this time

those who had been successful were large organisations who had significant resources to spend. This was not a process to identify future spend by the CA and clarified that the process was not intended to isolate small and medium enterprises but acknowledged that it was useful feedback about how organisations had seen the process. They emphasised the importance of local partnerships.

The Chair suggested that partners should share local successes and that the Combined Authority should be vocal about achievements in the partnership. Officers confirmed that successes would be communicated throughout the West Yorkshire Strategic Climate and Environment Partnership.

Resolved: The committee noted the content of the submitted report and provided feedback on the questions posed in Appendix 1 (West Yorkshire Strategic Climate and Environment Partnership Overview).

15. Date of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Combined Authority was scheduled to be held on Tuesday 26 November 2024.