

**MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP -
DEVELOPING THE COUNCIL'S GREEN AGENDA**

MEETING DATE Thursday, 12 September 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Steve Holgate (Chair), Councillor Paul Sloan (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Val Counce, Mark Clifford, Alex Hilton and Laura Lennox

OFFICERS: Victoria Willett (Service Lead - Transformation and Partnerships), James Hoskinson (Central Lancashire Technical Officer), Ruth Rimmington (Democratic and Member Services Team Leader) and Nina Neisser (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Gordon France and June Molyneaux

19.OS1 Declarations of any Interests

No declarations of any interests were received.

19.OS2 Background Information

The Overview and Scrutiny Task Group were provided with presentations from officers, a background and context paper and the 'LGA Councillor's Workbook: acting on climate change' to help with scoping their review.

Vicky Willett, Service Lead – Transformation and Partnerships, who would be Lead Officer for the task group review delivered a presentation to give Members some background information and context, including work that the council was currently undertaking to become more environmentally sustainable.

Chorley currently holds a strong environmental position with 71.8% of land designated as green belt and over 300 hectares of countryside. Total carbon emissions were higher than the national average when measured by tonnage per person which could be due to the proximity to the motorway network, however mortality attributed to poor air quality was better than the all England average when last recorded in 2016. Household recycling rates have improved in recent years with Chorley's at 42.7% for 2017/18. As of 1 October, there would be an increased range of plastic products that can be recycled via bin collections.

The Green Agenda was supported nationally through different policies such as, The Clean Growth Strategy, The Clean Air Strategy and the paper on 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment'. Each outline central government's green

agenda and how to work towards a greener, healthier and more sustainable future for the next generation.

As a Council, Chorley already undertakes numerous activities and initiatives which support our Green Agenda including:

- **Sustainable transport:** electric fleet vehicles, electric charging points on Market street, additional bike storage in the town centre
- **Policy and Strategy:** joint procurement strategy includes priority and action to support sustainable products and services.
- **Staff incentives:** subsidised rail passes and 'Cycle to Work' scheme, implemented WorkSmart and upgraded ICT systems meaning it is now easier for staff to work remotely/reduce the amount of car travel
- **Council Buildings:** energy efficiency lighting installed in all buildings, solar panels on Town Hall roof, biodegradable knives and forks.
- **Project and service delivery:** proposals to create wildflower meadows and corridors, community projects such as MySpace.
- **Astley Hall:** 'green museums', new energy efficient track lights and radiators, work with Café Ambio to use paper straws, vegware cups for takeaway drinks, and glass sugar dispensers, grow organically in the eco-friendly walled garden

Members were advised of the various ways that other councils were tackling climate change. These included creating council and community climate change pledges, installing solar farms, expertise from a dedicated officer resource or consultancy advice, and declaring a Climate Change Emergency.

Looking ahead, Members recognised that the council had the opportunity to lead and influence change across Chorley whilst setting an example to help ensure environmental considerations are part of everything, we do in order to make a real tangible difference.

Following this presentation, James Hoskinson, Central Lancashire Technical Officer, provided a specific example of some of the current work being undertaken by the Council in his presentation on the council's 'Sustainable September' campaign which had been encouraging staff to find more sustainable ways to travel to work to help protect the environment.

The Sustainable September initiative proposed the collective sustainable commuting by staff at Chorley Council throughout September 2019 to help address climate change and carbon targets, and to improve physical and mental wellbeing.

The campaign was being promoted amongst staff through the staff matters meeting, a Yammer Group had been set up and information published on the Loop. It was hoped that a survey would be undertaken on completion to record colleagues' experiences and any lasting change in habits.

To help with research managers were asked to collect responses from staff regarding their current commuting habits and the reasons why they typically chose single occupancy car usage over more sustainable and social alternatives. 64% travelled in a single occupancy car all the time, 5% some of the time, 6% car shared, 4% travelled by train, 3% travelled by bus, 15% walked and 3% cycled.

Officers felt that the main constraints to sustainable commuting were as follows; 31% needed to shop or take children to school/nursery, 17% lived in rural areas outside of Chorley, 35% have to use their cars for work and 17% said that public transport was too inconvenient or expensive.

The Task Group thanked officers for delivering their presentations and the work undertaken.

19.OS3 Scoping of the Review

Members of the Task Group considered the scope of the inquiry and discussed objectives, outcomes, and who they wanted to interview as part of the review, including Service Leads, market/town centre traders, schools, Chorley in Bloom and Funeral Directors.

Members acknowledged how big the issue of climate change was and recognised that any recommendations would need to be relevant, realistic and achievable. It was proposed that an interim report be submitted prior to the consideration of the budget for 2020/21.

The scoping document would be a working document that would be brought back to each meeting.

Decision – That the scoping document be drawn up in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair be brought back to the next meeting for approval by the Group.

19.OS4 Date of the Next Meeting

Thursday, 7 November 2019 at 6.00pm.

19.OS5 Any other item(s) that the Chair decides is/are urgent

Chair

Date