

NOTES OF MEETING

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION CLIMATE PARTNERSHIP

Thursday 13th October 2022, 4.00pm

Attendees:

Chair Gideon Ben-Tovim	Nature Connected/ Climate Partnership
Vice Chair Cllr. Gill Wood	Climate Partnership/ Combined Authority/Growth Hub
Sean Maher	Liverpool City Region CA, Environment Officer
Don Naylor	Friends of the Earth
Nick Thompson	CPRE The Countryside Charity
Rachel Waggett	Liverpool City Region CA, Principal Environment Officer (meeting admin)
Nicky Crosby	Extinction Rebellion
Matt Ellis	Environment Agency
Colm Bowe	Liverpool John Moores University
Jenni Brittlebank	Environment Agency
Cllr Phil Harris	Halton BC
Lucy Northey	Wirral Council
Annie Merrie	Faiths4Change
Cllr Liz Grey	Wirral BC
John Mellors	Liverpool City Region CA, Environment Officer
Peter Owen	Energy Projects Plus
Henry Cutts	Liverpool City Region CA, Gov Relations & Public Affairs Officer
Tim Jago	Liverpool City Region CA, Lead Officer - Housing Strategy & Policy
Steve Wong	United Utilities
Mandi Cragg	NHS Cheshire & Merseyside
Mike Wolffe	St Helens Borough Council

Apologies received from:

Cllr Liz Grey	Wirral Borough Council
Cllr Paulette Lappin	Sefton Borough Council

1. Welcome and introductions/ apologies for absence

Gideon Ben-Tovim welcomed all attendees to the meeting thanking everyone for their attendance. All attendees introduced themselves as shown on the attendees list. There were some apologies also as listed.

GBT highlighted that this would be Sean Maher's last meeting before he moves into a new role in the LCRCA's digital team, and thanked him for his contribution.

Jeni Brittlebank introduced herself as the Environment Agency's new Area Environmental Manager for the Liverpool City Region, replacing Ashley Bennington.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest noted.

3. Notes of last meeting for agreement



Cllr Phil Harris noted that he had not received the Community Environment Fund breakdown which was highlighted at the last meeting. Rachel Waggett said she would chase up with Tracy Gordon.

Nick Thompson highlighted a correction to a point made in previous minutes at point 6 – NT clarified he was referring to a joint project between Lancaster University & Sefton Council looking at reducing freight emissions linked to the Port of Liverpool. NT promised to send the link & hoped the Project Lead would be in touch with RW. *Previous minutes amended to reflect*

Don Naylor highlighted a line in the penultimate paragraph in the previous minutes which referred to the remit given to participants in a exercise, as not quite making sense. *Previous minutes amended to reflect*

DN also noted, referring to the point 6 conversation around Air Quality action plans, to be aware of Greater Manchester’s plans due to the shared border with Wigan.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising noted

5. UK Government BEIS Net Zero Review (call for evidence) – Henry Cutts – LCR Combined Authority

Henry Cutts provided an overview of a government consultation on Net Zero which has been commissioned by the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. The purpose of the consultation is to understand the impact of Net Zero on the public & the economy, with the aim to ensure the steps taken towards Net Zero are pro-growth & pro-business. The CA will be submitting a response to the broad range of questions and is keen to gain feedback from members, although the tight timescale means a full stakeholder engagement piece won’t be possible (deadline 27th October) . The questions are broken up into sections for Local Government, Business & general public etc.

GBT asked HC if he could provide a flavour of the nature of the questions & any initial thinking. HC confirmed that the overarching message will be that Net Zero is not a barrier to growth, and in fact it is supporting it. The two are intrinsically linked. HC also highlighted the fact that some of the 30 questions are potentially leading.

Colm Bowe queried as to how the questions aligned to the CA responding, and whether this was on behalf of the people of the LCR. HC said that the overarching & Local Government questions would be answered from a CA point of view. For the other questions aimed at business, academia & the public the aim is to engage with stakeholders where possible and also draw on findings from previous consultations. CB highlighted the Natural Capital work that is currently informing the SDS which could help how net zero & growth are complimentary, particularly around green skills & jobs.

Matt Ellis wondered what opportunities there were to include positive messaging around offsetting & land management (which doesn’t increase carbon emissions) to further highlight the benefits.

Nick Thompson re-emphasised the links to the project mentioned earlier between Lancaster University & Sefton Council, and urged consideration of the report in the CA response.

Cllr Phil Harris was keen to stress the importance of not “watering down” Biodiversity net gain. Cllr Harris also wanted to seek assurance on retaining laws which protect the natural environment and support practices such as wildlife friendly farming. The Habitat regulations doesn’t inspire much confidence and supporting the organisations like the RSPB and the Wildlife Trust should be a priority.

Don Naylor wondered whether the Government’s decision not to appeal the High Court ruling on its Net Zero strategy should be factored into this consultation.

GBT summarised that he hoped the CA would take on board the points raised and champion ‘clean growth’. GBT queried whether the consultation was open to anyone to respond to, an HC confirmed it was. HC thanked those who had contributed and offered to pick up separately if others had points to raise after the meeting.

John Mellors highlighted the link provided doesn’t detail how to submit a response. HC said he would find the link and send round.

6. LCR Combined Authority Devolution Discussion – *Tim Jago, LCR Combined Authority*

Tim Jago provided an overview on the current devolution proposition thinking within the CA.

Colm Bowe flagged the role of green space & nature in the place agenda and transport agenda around active travel. CB acknowledged the Shared Prosperity Fund has already gone through, but emphasised that this could be considered for funding pots further down the line. TJ agreed this was important and highlighted this theme runs through the Plan for Prosperity document. The key to the devolution document is about assessing what the CA can & can’t do. The points raised around green space will also be included in the emerging Spatial Development Strategy.

Matt Ellis highlighted the point raised in the presentation around a more formalised relationship with DEFRA and said the Environment Agency would more than happy to soft test some of this thinking. Adaptation & water management are two key conversations with the EA could help broker. TJ welcomed the opportunity to soft test, noting it still is a couple of months away, but some sense testing has already taken place with some civil servants at an informal level.

ME also highlighted some good practice from Greater Manchester around devolved funding streams, such as Brownfield Land, Housing Investment, with the caveat that LCR will have its own unique picture. TJ responded that colleagues are keeping an eye on GM, but will be sure to return the group if any more technical insights are required. ME said the EA has people embedded within GM who could be called upon when the time is right. TJ said Tracy Gordon should be included in that conversation as she is focused on the delivery aspect of housing.

GBT referenced the earlier point raised by Colm Bowe, and noted that in the One Place section of the presentation, there was no mention of an enhanced natural environment as one of the desired outcomes. GBT conceded that it was understood as a cross-cutting theme, but was concerned it may get lost if it’s not mentioned explicitly. The same could be applied to the skills section. TJ responded that the presentation is high level and there is much more detail which sits behind them, but was happy to included the suggestions mentioned. The format of the final piece of work is still unknown, but it will be up to the CA to utilise the Plan

for Prosperity and ensuring any devolved powers make their way into the relevant policy strategies.

Cllr Phil Harris observed that resource challenges make it difficult to explore some finance opportunities which exist. Cllr Harris highlighted the work taking place in Greater Manchester and their engagement with the Green Finance Institute, leveraging in global finance to tackle climate change. Cllr Harris said he hoped that the resource would be put in place at a City Region level to exploit these opportunities as GM have. The funding currently received by Halton is not sufficient tackle the housing EPC standards facing it. TJ said the CA is yet to go into any specific detail on the finance aspect but the reference to the GFI is interesting. The thinking hasn't yet gone beyond simplified funding streams, but a conversation around dedicated funding pots could be useful. All avenues should be explored given the scale of the challenge.

Don Naylor was encouraged by the notion of the CA's preference to move towards green hydrogen, and wondered if this distinction could be made in the actual text. TJ understood there to work currently taking place on a green hydrogen study.

Nick Thompson wondered why there wasn't an ask for more statutory powers rather than more statutory responsibilities. TJ said there is a parallel piece of work looking at current powers and what has been done with them, which is important to do because ministers may challenge on what has already been achieved. There may well be further requests for powers to come from this work. The presentation delivered here sets out the objectives. NT added he hoped there would be some regional planning powers. TJ responded that the CA does have planning powers at a sub-regional level through the SDS.

GBT thanked TJ for the presentation and was reassured by the commitment to Net Zero & the natural environment. TJ said this aligns with the Corporate Plan.

**7. Brief update on LCR Five Year Action Plan progress – Rachel Waggett, LCR
Combined Authority**

Rachel Waggett provided an update on the 5 Year Climate Action Plan. RW referenced the stakeholder workshops which have been taking place across the pillars, with just the Industry pillar left to run within the next couple of weeks. Many of the members attended the Natural Environment session. In conjunction with the Net Zero Delivery Board and Chief Executive, it has been agreed that the socialisation process for the plan will be extended, to ensure all stakeholders and partners are as happy as possible with the final version. This will be further opportunity for stakeholders, including members of the partnership, to comment on the draft plan before it is finalised. Given the disruption over the Xmas period, the aim is to take the final document to the March 2023 Combined Authority, with it coming into effect from April. This aligns with the Corporate Plan & other strategies, as well as the monitoring framework. This timescale is slower than anticipated, but the priority is to ensure the CA get this right, as opposed to rushing through a “watered-down” version. The Chief Executive has indicated her approval, but the proposal is yet to go to the Portfolio holder Cllr David Baines as there hasn’t yet been a portfolio board meeting since this was raised (Cllr Gill Wood was also hearing this for the first time). RW stated she hoped this approach would allay some fears members had raised at the Natural Environment workshop around having the opportunity to further comment on the actions.

RW also acknowledged that this approach creates a significant gap between the conclusion of the Year One Climate Action Plan and the beginning of the 5 Year Plan. However, RW reassured members that this was a perceived gap rather than an actual gap. Many actions have been progressing in this period, they just haven’t been written down in an action plan. RW referred to the presentation delivered earlier by Tim Jago, and hoped this would provide comfort to members on how far the CA has come on embedding Net Zero throughout its strategies.

GBT queried whether there would be a draft to view at the next partnership meeting. RW confirmed that was the plan, albeit it may contain some gaps, particularly around the Industry pillar due to the delay in the workshop. John Mellors clarified that this would specifically be a draft of the action sections, rather than the whole document. RW confirmed.

GBT clarified for the next meeting there would be an update on what actions have been taking place since the conclusion of the Y1CAP, and then a draft of the 5 Year Plan actions.

Colm Bowe commented that he attended the Natural Environment workshop and commended the way it was run. CB stated he felt things were really starting to come together.

GBT welcomed CB feedback and the extended opportunity for members to comment on the plan.

RW emphasised that this will be a working document which will provide a ‘framework for action’, due to the fluid nature of policy & funding. If opportunities arise to accelerate action, then this will be taken forward.

8. AOB

There were no areas of other business noted



9. Next Meeting	
4pm Thursday 24th November 2022	
Useful Links	
https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/review-of-net-zero-call-for-evidence/net-zero-review-call-for-evidence	