

# Climate Leadership Gloucestershire Meeting #19 28/11/2024, Meeting Notes

## Climate Leadership Gloucestershire

### Notes and actions of the meeting

#### **Attendance**

The following partners were in attendance:

<b>Partner organisation</b>	<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
Cheltenham Borough Council	Cllr Iain Dobie	Frances Crick
Cotswold District Council	Cllr Mike McKeown	Rob Weaver
Forest of Dean District Council	Cllr Chris McFarling (Chair) Andy Barge	Nigel Brinn
Gloucester City Council	Cllr Sebastian Field Jon McGinty	
Gloucestershire County Council	Cllr David Gray	Colin Chick
Stroud District Council	Cllr Chloe Turner	Brendan Cleere
Tewkesbury Borough Council	Cllr Cate Cody	Simon Dix
Hospitals Trusts	Jen Cleary	
Integrated Care Board	Dan Corfield	
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner and Gloucestershire Constabulary		Mandy Gibbs
Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership	Nicola Hillary	Stephanie Sargeant
Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils	Kerrin Wilkinson	
Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group	Polly Gannaway-Pitts Megan Land	
Secretariat	Afriqnmun Lovejoy David Sharman	

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## 1) Welcome, apologies and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

## 2) Declarations of Interest

No declarations.

## 3) Approval of meeting notes: 24<sup>th</sup> October CLG meeting (paper 2)

Meeting notes approved by members as a true and accurate record.

**Decision: Climate Leadership Gloucestershire approved the October meeting notes.**

## 4) Action Plan and Funding update

### Action Plan review

The Secretariat introduced the session and confirmed that due to this being the last meeting of 2024, instead of the usual update drawing attention to key actions, the Secretariat will give a high-level summary across all 10 themes.

The Secretariat introduced the themes and summary progress against them:

#### Adaptation

At the last meeting of this group, Atkins-Realis set out their plan to deliver a Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, due to complete by the end of 2025. This will now kick off early in the new year.

#### Biodiversity

The primary focus of the theme lead's (Local Nature Partnership) has been the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) –drafting is ongoing and a public consultation process planned for February 2025 (tbc).

It was noted that the action- 'Gloucestershire's aspiration that everyone lives within a 15 minutes' walk of accessible biodiversity rich green space' has been proposed as one of the measures in the draft Gloucestershire LNRS.

It was noted regarding the Gloucestershire Nature + Climate Fund- that there was renewed drive to get draft s106 agreements completed following our September CLG meeting. This has seen a s106 agreement already sent to landowners in the Cotswold and Forest of Dean Districts. Comments from OneLegal are still outstanding, and now holding back GNCF being able to progress other key sites and ensure maximum in-county delivery of offsite BNG for our developments.

#### Transport

It was noted that the Transport theme will be reported on in detail at a later item during this meeting.

#### Energy

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The primary focus of the Energy theme has been progression of the county Local Area Energy Plan. This is progressing via a joint procurement with the Southwest Net Zero Hub, alongside Dorset, Wiltshire and Devon. This will progress Stages 1-3 of the process as per the Energy Systems Catapult methodology. These stages are primarily focused on stakeholder engagement and data gathering. The latter stages cover modelling the system needs to meet our future energy demands.

The Invitation To Tender has now been published by the Hub; with the project likely launching early in the New Year.

District involvement in the process was queried; it was confirmed that all districts would be engaged in-depth when the project launches.

The second action being progressed is the creation of the community energy forum, which has now met three times. The youth group sought further details of the known community energy groups in the county and the Secretariat agreed to share these offline.

**Action:** Secretariat to share details of the community energy forum with the youth group.

The Heat Networks action is also being progressed- with a session with climate officers in December to explore feasibility and the policy landscape for further networks within the county.

### Planning

It was noted that the Planning theme needed to progress further. The potential impact of devolution and the forthcoming NPPF has had an effect on previously agreed plans for a shared climate and planning officer/resource.

### Behaviour change

The key output from the theme this year has been the GCC funded Climate Community Fund first round which successfully allocated to 12 local mitigation projects, with progress reports expected in April 25. After this point the theme lead will return to report to CLG.

The theme lead Kelly Osborne is preparing a further funding round, and would be very happy to include any budget from CLG partners towards this.

**Action:** All partners to consider if they wish to put any outstanding budget toward a second round of the Climate Community Fund.

Further work is needed to take forward the internal behaviour change actions (for CLG's own organisations) and the importance of the work under procurement and staff training was flagged as a priority.

### Economy

The Economy theme is split into two sections- green skills and business support.

Regarding the skills update- the county Green Skills Coordinator that was funded by the CLG Action Fund, Jon Hickman, began this month with initial goals around stimulating retrofit skills and renewable generation skills, and with the overarching goal of creating a green skills strategy for the county. Jon will be coming to CLG to present on this, most likely at the June meeting next year.

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Regarding business support- the Net Zero Business Conference is going forward on the 11<sup>th</sup> December. It is expected that core funding for the business support service will be confirmed next year, at which point CLG will consider further additionality to this service.

### Farming

CLG have endorsed Gloucester Food and Farming Partnership as an action earlier this year. Work has now progressed with GFFP, alongside key stakeholders, the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG). The first active project of this theme is now progressing- the integrated food and farming policy research project being led by CCRI. Interviews with all Authorities had now taken place under that project with workshops expected to follow early in new year. CCRI will report back on the project at the April CLG meeting.

It was also noted that a National Lottery Climate Action Fund bid was planned to expand farmer clusters across the county, and create a central resource providing materials and support on regenerative agriculture, agroecology and transitioning the sector to net zero.

### Retrofit

The contract with Furbnow to deliver the new Gloucestershire Retrofit platform underway, which will provide expert support and pathways to energy efficiency improvements. The beta version of the platform will be produced next month, with full launch in January 2025. The Secretariat and project steering group are also working with comms teams and engagement officers from across the authorities to develop a marketing plan and comms pack to go alongside that launch.

### Waste

The Secretariat noted that this is a further theme that's still struggling to significantly progress.

The team have worked (through the Resources and Waste Partnership) primarily on the fleet decarbonisation action. It's become clear that there is a serious issue around charging infrastructure and grid constraints. Work with waste contractor Ubico confirms that even transitioning to increased EV vans or other small vehicles within fleet would be very difficult given current constraints at depots. They noted that whilst most collection authorities are following a HVO fuel transitional strategy, they're also still planning to move to EV fleets for smaller vehicles. CLG will continue to pursue development of a waste infrastructure strategy to provide the required data on this, and will present this to the Resources and Waste Partnership.

It was asked whether waste authorities had previously sought private sector partnership on waste fleet electrification, as some banks are considering provision of such support. The Secretariat was unaware of this.

**Action:** The Secretariat will follow up further with the Member raising the query to explore further.

### Funding update

The secretariat flagged the timings and process of the Strategic Economic Development Fund bidding windows for 2025. The fund is being operated by the City Region Board to

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support projects that drive economic growth activity aligned to the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy. Applications need to be submitted by one of the seven authorities for these new waves. The next wave is due to be allocated at the 6th of March City Region Board meeting; meaning there will be limited time available to brief CLG partners before submitting bids. The main intention is for CLG to focus on a bid for the further stages of the Local Area Energy Plan process at the later wave in September. Any CLG-related bids to be presented to partners via circulation, and in advance of the formal meetings of this group and the City Region Board.

### 5) Best practice sharing session: Devon Climate Emergency Partnership

Emily Reed confirmed her role as Secretariat to the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership. The partnership includes all Devon Local Authorities, including the unitary councils; several third sector organisations; the county's universities; emergency response organisations; and utilities companies.

The partnership aims to reach net zero by 2050, alongside building local resilience to climate change, preparing communities for a warmer world. The partnership is primarily funded by Devon County Council.

Areas of activity-

Development of the Devon Carbon Plan: The net zero task force under the partnership created the plan, examining pathways to net zero. Consultation for this included regular meetings with residents and a youth parliament event.

Climate Citizens Assembly: This was a further strand of consultation of the carbon plan, tackling the more contentious issues of mitigation. This included the role of onshore wind, encouraging retrofit, and shifting away from car use.

Monitoring the plan: The plan is monitored via a monthly progress report updating the actions from one theme within the report. The partnership also works with the University of Exeter to create an annual carbon footprint reporting against locally developed carbon budgets. The university has created a bespoke dashboard of indicators to give a better idea of progress.

Energy Planning: The partnership is pursuing a Local Area Energy Plan, similar to Gloucestershire (part of the same joint procurement with the SWNZH).

Climate Adaptation Strategy: This is a regional strategy, working with Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. This is heavily based on the national risk assessment with some local issues, such as increase in fog, emphasised further. It also includes an adaptation action plan, with collaborative actions over the next five years on a regional basis. The strategy includes sections on natural environment, infrastructure, health and the built environment, business and industry, and a cross-cutting theme (including international dimensions).

#### Key points arising from the discussion:

The wider membership group of the partnership was noted- including water boards and utilities companies. Our Secretariat may wish to consider widening CLG membership in a similar fashion.

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It was asked whether the fact that funding mainly came from the County Council meant that it was hard to get action and resources committed from other members. Emily confirmed that this can be an issue, however all partners have activity and actions that align with the Partnership's objectives and relationships are strong. Emily also confirmed that they are trying to encourage wider partnership contributions going forward, as they move into a delivery phase on actions.

There was interest in the University of Exeter's work on producing a local carbon budget, and baselining of emissions. Emily confirmed that the work was contracted to the Centre for Energy and Environment via their South West Energy Group: which Gloucestershire might consider. Cllr Gray confirmed that the County Council had commissioned Small World Consulting to carry out baselining work, which could be brought back to CLG to consider further work for countywide baselining.

### 6) Transport theme update

Luisa Senft-Hayward introduced the theme and background including the work in January 2023 to develop a transport decarbonisation target and the statement of shared intent. Out of this has followed the development of an action plan to achieve the ambition of 80% decarbonation by 2030 and net zero for 2050 via both the CLG action plan and the County Council's transport decarbonisation strategy. This strategy summary is due to be released soon.

Luisa started the presentation with a reminder of the amount of CO2 reduction needed to stay within 1.5 degrees of warming compared to the current trajectory for the county.

She noted that 'Road traffic generates over 95% of transport carbon emissions, 60% of that is car travel; freight is most of the remaining emissions and only 5% of CO2 emissions from transport are public transport related trips within the county.'

She then provided further details on journey demographics: journeys within, to and from the county account for about 65% of emissions, which is important to bear in mind because the other 35% relates to trips 'through' Gloucestershire. For example -someone travelling from Bristol to Birmingham on the M5- accounted as carbon emissions in Gloucestershire in national statistics, though there's relatively little that we can do to influence these trips.

Luisa went on to describe the three main levers to reduce transport carbon emissions included in the transport decarbonisation strategy:

Avoid need to travel

The first lever is to completely avoid the need to travel, with the result of fewer vehicle kilometres travelled, and that results in a carbon reduction.

Measures suggested:

- Promoting more work online and at home.
- Better town planning to create liveable neighbourhoods with good local amenities
- New housing close to usable services, public transport and infrastructure.

Shift mode of travel

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The second lever would be mode shift: any shift from the car to public transport, shared modes of transport or cycling and walking. The result of which would mean more trips would be by sustainable transport modes, which again would result in fewer vehicle kilometres travelled and reduced emissions.

Measures suggested:

- A network of express bus services, integrated to transport interchange hub network.
- Excellent active travel infrastructure with good connections between the different active transport modes.
- Support car sharing and car pooling, as well as further commuter-related schemes.
- Consideration of parking charges and locations to ensure that the right incentives are provided to shift mode of transport.

Improved vehicles and driving

The third lever is to improve vehicles and improve driving. Either a move to smaller vehicles or a move to zero emission vehicles, but also through more efficient driving. This action does not seek to reduce the amount of vehicle kilometres driven it just makes each kilometre cleaner and greener.

Measures suggested:

- Widespread rollout of EV infrastructure
- EV bus rollout
- Opportunities for eco driving training
- Targeted measures to reduce emissions

It's assumed that half of the emissions to reach our target would come through lowering emissions per km driven (third lever), with the other half coming from a mode shift or reduction of trips (first two levers).

Interventions which could help deliver these reductions:

Luisa noted that three distinct geographical types had been modelled for intervention: urban areas (Gloucester & Cheltenham), market towns, and rural areas. Interventions are planned relevant to that geography e.g. liveable neighbourhoods more appropriate for urban setting, more online working being relevant to all geographies, along with shifts to low/no emission vehicles.

Luisa then went on to point out some of the potential reductions or end goal from the measures suggested:

- Better land use planning and reduced trip length; reducing trip by about 5 to 10%
- Increased online activities could reduce car trips for about 5 to 10%; equivalent to working-from-home levels in the Cotswolds in 2020.

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- Electric vehicle car clubs and company fleet upgrades to bring forward the zero-emission vehicle uptake by about 6 to 8 years if compared to the current trajectory, and use of smaller cars for about 25% of car travel.
- A doubling of bus use in Gloucestershire, which would bring us at the same level as Oxfordshire.
- 5% of journey could be through ride sharing via new technology.
- Excellent active travel provision, comparable to the 'Go Dutch' scenario, reflecting the attitude towards cycling to the Netherlands, but with local topography and demographic trends.
- Widespread uptake of E bikes, which can lengthen the average trip length of cycling, but also make different geographical areas more accessible for bike group use.
- A smarter road network that manages speed limits and promotes eco driving and generally smooths traffic levels, which would also result in a CO2 saving.

Measures included in today's presentation are included in both the CLG Action Plan and the County Council's strategy. The implementation of those plans should be covered by development of policy; investment in those policies, and thorough communication of these measures. This approach is being taken forward via policy sprint groups coordinated by CLG and the County Council as theme lead.

Current CLG actions underway include:

- The review of all Local Plans, and Local Transport Plans (LTPs).
- Trailing a DfT connectivity tool to better assess coordination and join-up of active travel networks across districts.
- 2024 Bus Service Improvement Plan now published, which includes ambitious plans for our services, receiving positive feedback from DfT. An Enhanced Partnership with bus companies has now been set up.
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans covering most settlements, alongside a countywide plan.
- Work on the cycle spine also continues.
- Continued rollout of EV infrastructure via LEVI funding.
- Investigating shared transport decarbonisation such as EV car clubs.

### Key points arising from the discussion:

It was asked why there was such current disparity in levels of bus services between Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. Luisa confirmed that this was down to long term development of pro-bus policies, particularly at Oxford City. The City has a long-term successful park and ride scheme, a lot of bus infrastructure, and have prioritised bus travel in city planning, which has now stretched out to the surrounding county. It was also noted that Oxford is 40% bigger than Cheltenham, and 20% of the population are students.

The term of 'transport accessibility' was queried, and how this was measured. Luisa confirmed that the proxy used was 'how many people could reach their GP surgery by public transport within 45 minutes' to represent sufficient accessibility.

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It was asked whether the districts could do more to assist the theme. Luisa confirmed that the districts have all received an 'indicator checklist' to monitor progress on policies. This is with the climate officer network. All districts should review this and look to progress policies. The specific opportunity of districts acting as anchor institutions for car clubs was also discussed.

### 7) National policy horizon scan and current LGA climate policy activities

Nick Porter, Senior Advisor at the LGA introduced himself and the key points of his presentation today. Nick covered four themes:

The overall relationship between Government and Local Authorities

- LGA are working toward resetting the Local Net Zero Forum facilitated by DESNZ, and hope for some positive news around that.
- Assessing the wider governance around the green energy mission, and local government's role in delivering that mission.

The energy systems reforms

- LGA are assessing the scale of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and concerns around generation sites, and associated infrastructure.
- LGA is currently having conversations with central Government on community benefit models- and how communities can be incentivised to accept energy assets.
- Ofgem are creating Regional Energy Spatial Plans which should help shape what places think about the energy system, and deliver national commitments.
- Local Area Energy Plans can be really useful still for places to understand the opportunities for addressing grid constraints and economic opportunities for generation. They should also be a really useful evidence base for RESP discussions.
- The 'Local Power Plan'- will deliver target for 8GW of community energy produced. Details of what this means in practice are still to be announced. Likely to include grant funding, and capacity support for LAs to help foster community energy projects.

Retrofit and Housing

- Government will launch next stage of Warm Homes Plan in Spring/Summer 2025, and the LGA are doing a lot of work to influence that.
- In advance of that Warm Homes Local Fund grants have been announced, which has provided some further flexibilities.
- The Warm Homes Social Housing Fund has also been announced.
- Future Homes and Building Standards: Ministers are keen for this to come forward as soon as possible, but delayed due to developers raising practical issues, most significantly the lack of grid capacity to connect electric-powered homes.
- Intention for Government to publish consultation on Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the rental sector. This was due to publish at the end of this year, which may now slip to next.

Nature

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- Local Nature Recovery Strategies due to all publish next year.
- Government has talked vaguely about backing these strategies and making them deliver.
- LGA expects a national Land Use Framework imminently, which will support stakeholders to manage competing demands on land.

Nick finished by confirming that the LGA has had a lot of pressure to consider what a Local Authority statutory duty to deliver on climate change should look like, and requested views on that.

### **Key points arising from the discussion:**

In response to Nick's question, the Chair flagged the importance of re considering/increasing EV charger ratios to number of houses, and suggested a statutory duty with plenty of funding to achieve it. This is particularly key for the 30 to 40% of homes that don't have off-street parking.

Cllr Gray noted the challenges with housing standards and expressed frustration with delays and further consultation, which effectively delays our ability to move forward with our decarbonisation priorities.

Cllr Turner noted that she would be interested in exploring the opportunity for CLG to put its weight behind any campaign for making delivery of climate change action a statutory duty for Local Authorities.

The Secretariat thanked Nick for his time. If attendees had further feedback on what a statutory duty should look like they can contact Nick via the email provided separately.

### **8) Forward look 2025 – 2026**

The Secretariat noted that given the time, views on the draft Forward Look would now be sought via email. The draft attached as part of today's papers has been developed to include some national and external drivers. Reasonable detail is included in the Forward Look until mid-2025, but it was felt there was little point in doing this beyond that point due to continued uncertainty in national policy priorities and timelines. Therefore, there will be a need to update the forward look early in 2025 and to keep it under review.

### **9) Any Other Climate Business**

No further business raised.

The Chair thanked all for coming along, for their efforts during 2024 together, and wished everyone a great Christmas and New Year.