

Climate Leadership Gloucestershire Meeting 4: 22/6/2022 14.00-16.00

Notes and actions of the meeting

1. Attendance

The following partners were in attendance:

Partner organisation	Attendees	Apologies
Cheltenham Borough Council	Cllr Alisha Lewis Mike Redman	
Cotswold District Council	Cllr Rachel Coxcoo Chris Crookall-Fallon	Rob Weaver
Forest of Dean District Council	Cllr Chris McFarling (Vice-Chair) Peter Williams	
Gloucester City Council	Cllr Richard Cook Jon McGinty	
Gloucestershire County Council	Cllr David Gray (Chair) Colin Chick Wayne Lewis Robin Drake	
Stroud District Council	Cllr Chloe Turner Rachel Brain	Brendan Cleere
Tewkesbury Borough Council	Cllr Jim Mason Simon Dix Pete Tonge	
Hospitals Trusts	Jen Cleary	Deborah Lee
Clinical Commissioning Group	Andrew Hughes	Mary Hutton
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner and Gloucestershire Constabulary	Mandy Gibbs	
GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership	Sarah Danson Emma Hanby	
Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership	Doug Hulyer	
Countywide resource and Secretariat	Julian Atkins	

2. Welcome and Introductions

Cllr McFarling chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest

4. Retrofit Theme (Paper 1)

Rachel Brain, 2030 Strategy Manager at Stroud DC, gave the presentation on the Retrofit theme and the challenges the sector faces in making the necessary reductions in carbon emissions. The key points from the presentation were:

It is important to make a distinction between retrofit more generally and low carbon retrofit which seeks to reduce both energy use, through fabric first measures, and the dependency on fossil fuels through the deployment of alternative technologies (solar PV, air/ground source heat pumps etc.).

Retrofit actions usually happen in chunks but it is important to take a whole building approach to ensure the pieces connect together to maximise progress towards achieving net zero.

Retrofit activity delivers multiple socio-economic benefits on top of the carbon benefits but the retrofit landscape is complex. Supporting Retrofit actions requires activity across 4 delivery strands:

- Public sector (our own estate and buildings)
- Affordable warmth (social housing, private rental, vulnerable households)
- Private sector (homeowners, businesses)
- Community assets (shared estate and buildings, shared/ localised energy supplies)

and these are dependent upon 4 strategic pillars being in place:

- Planning – regulation and energy infrastructure
- Economy – supporting growth and meeting demand
- Skills – expertise and capacity to deliver now and into the future
- Behaviour Change – attitudes to retrofit, social norms & trends

Gloucestershire has benefited from, and is recognised for, its long established and nationally recognised Warm & Well programme supported through a pioneering health funded approach and partnership; as well as programmes which are tackling both the domestic and business sectors. We are delivering across all four strands:

- Public sector (Feed in Tariff/Renewable Heat Incentive projects; good take up of Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund opportunities, Zero Carbon public estate work)
- Affordable warmth (social housing decarbonisation innovation pilot, Warm and Well programme)
- Private sector (Innovate 2 Renovate, Target 2030 supporting SMEs)
- Skills and Strategy (SEDF funded Retrofit Skills Centre at Berkeley, Local Partnerships Health Check for Retrofit in Stroud and Cotswold, Active Building Centre/AXCELL)

To make even greater progress it is important to understand the challenges involved:

Carbon: The built environment is one of the highest emitting sectors and 80% of it is in private ownership. Most of the building stock has been constructed to past standards and even new builds aren't yet fully net zero. And current retrofit programmes and grant schemes are geared to affordable warmth and not low carbon.

Financing: Retrofit actions require upfront investment and access to finance can be difficult. At present there is no locally agreed notional value for a tonne of Carbon to help with the analysis of social returns on investments. Low carbon retrofit solutions lack widespread visibility and are not seen as aspirational and marketing and promotion isn't yet well developed.

Skills & Supply Chain: The current suite of grant-aided incentive programmes does not incentivise growth and does not encourage risk taking to support business/skills development.

Fragmentation in delivery: The dominance of grant-aided incentives has also encouraged a piecemeal approach which has led to quality and consistency issues (though the forthcoming introduction of PAS2035 will improve quality standards).

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Coordination & Leadership: Our experience to date shows that focussed leadership and coordination can address these challenges and deliver additional benefits but how we enable and resource this has yet to be worked out.

Energy Supply: Energy infrastructure is not enabling proactive energy supply solutions and the regulatory environment needs to be overhauled to enable the development of decentralised democratised renewable energy supplies matched to the community energy demands of the future.

While Gloucestershire is well placed to capitalise on 2 decades of retrofit activity current forecasts predict low private sector take up of Retrofit solutions and we but we now need a greater focus on low carbon retrofit actions to develop the retrofit market. The Retrofit Centre initiative which is being developed is seeking to target the able to pay market and will provide advice and support help grow market demand and capacity.

The key challenge now is to broaden retrofit activity to take in the private sector and achieve similar levels of outputs and outcomes but in a much shorter time frame. There is real potential for Climate Leadership Gloucestershire to lead and coordinate the work that is needed and to achieve this the presentation identified 10 needs and made 8 recommendations designed to address the 4 challenges of:

- Leadership
- Finance
- Expertise
- Safeguarding existing services

In discussing the retrofit challenges, CLG members made the following points:

The importance of retrofit activity in supporting health and wellbeing through affordable warmth and fabric first interventions given the current increases in energy prices was highlighted.

The challenges involved in developing and funding the re-skilling and training ecosystem that is needed to support retrofit delivery was highlighted. There are real challenges in securing the necessary funding to support further training for existing skilled tradespeople in the traditional construction/building repair sectors to expand into the retrofit sector. The big challenge with re-skilling is working with the training institutions to demonstrate that the upfront investment in retrofit courses is justified and is structured in line with the whole house approach. The centre at Berkeley is a first step in developing the training ecosystem that is needed and AXCELL in the Forest of Dean is doing complementary work.

There is a need to understand the scale of demand and supply in the sector and Local Authorities have an important role to play in acting as an independent trusted advisor and helping people navigate all of the information, of varying quality, that is available so that the retrofit market matures and becomes less fragile.

Trying to get reliable customer advice about retrofit options is extremely difficult. Obtaining a whole-house plan to help steer sensible conversations with installers about options is invaluable and to help consumers to make informed retrofit investment decisions. (The Retrofit Centre in development is seeking to do just this and research has shown that there is a need for Local Authorities to act as trusted advisors).

A focussed discussion is needed to assess the level of resources that are necessary to make the progress that is needed regarding low carbon retrofit takeup and CLG recognised that this is needed.

It would be nice to be able to help consumers to understand the best contractors who can give the best advice but public sector bodies can't do this though we can use media and communications content to showcase retrofit projects on our own estate and the contractors involved.

The role of CLG in lobbying government on the need for long term support mechanisms and funding to support retrofit activity and the issue of VAT rates on building renovation works and home energy

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saving measures as a disincentive were both highlighted. The Secretariat reported that the objectives of Climate Leadership Gloucestershire as set out in the terms of reference include: providing a collective voice and leadership on action needed at a national level to support local delivery on climate action; and presenting visible leadership on climate action for the county. It was therefore agreed that the Secretariat would draft a letter on behalf of CLG to the Chancellor making the cases for a VAT regime and long term support/funding mechanisms which encourage greater take up of private sector low carbon retrofit installations.

One authority noted that they had received a record number of building control applications in the preceding week as builders/developers sought to obtain consent ahead of new building control regulations coming onto force in June.

The NHS had received £13.7M from the first round of Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund to support retrofit projects including pipe lagging, LED light conversions, air source heat pumps and battery storage. A further suite of projects has been developed in readiness for future funding opportunities as they arise including Gloucester tower block (better windows and cladding) and a bid has just been submitted to help develop a Heat Decarbonisation Plan.

The Police have just completed a programme of LED light conversions, improved building controls to optimise buildings and a tougher energy policy has just been approved. £1.3M has been secured through phase 3 of the PSDF and this is funding the installation air source heat pumps at 3 sites.

Climate Leadership Gloucestershire endorsed the 10 needs and 8 recommendations set out in the paper.

22/22 Action: RB and Secretariat to set up a group to estimate resource needs for Retrofit.

22/23 Action: Secretariat to write to the Chancellor regarding VAT rates and long term support mechanisms for low carbon retrofit.

5. Waste Theme (Paper 2)

Peter Tonge presented the Waste theme and the work of the Gloucestershire Strategic Resources and Waste Partnership which oversees the management of waste collection and recycling services across Gloucestershire. The partnership has been in existence for a number of years and tackling the climate emergency is at the heart of its vision and mission. The partnership's current Joint Waste Management Strategy focusses on 9 key objectives and has been adopted by all seven local authorities. Good progress has been made on increasing recycling rates and reducing residual waste but there is a lot more to do. A new Strategic Waste Management Strategy is in development but there is a lot happening in the waste management world and the government has been consulting on a number of proposals regarding Extended Producer Responsibility, Deposit Return Schemes and consistent collecting methodologies; and the outcomes from these consultations have not yet been communicated. The Partnership has therefore taken the decision that the new Strategy will be an interim Strategy oriented towards the next 2-5 years pending DEFRA introducing any changes.

The partnership has identified carbon reduction opportunities in the following areas:

- Decarbonisation of the Waste fleet (Dependent on finance and technology)
- Reducing waste levels and carbon levels still further (but this will involve tough decisions and additional cost)
- Population and housing growth will enable waste services to be re-imagined especially in areas of significant new development
- The partnerships with UBICO will allow us to review the collection methodologies across a large part of the County.

Robin Drake introduced the new Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan which will be an important tool in enabling the transition to a climate change resilient and low carbon society. The County Council has

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committed itself to reviewing the waste planning framework currently in place for all waste streams countywide. The plan will need to ensure that new or upgraded waste management facilities/infrastructure become climate resilient assets and are also contributing to reductions in carbon emissions and there will be a need for clear prioritisation in the face of competing interests.

In summary, waste is a big topic and how waste management services are delivered affects every single household in the County but the partnership has a clear focus on the contribution it is making to the climate change/net zero agendas.

In discussing the presentation the need to cut carbon emissions by 80% by 2030 and the urgent need to meet the emissions gap in all sectors, including residual waste, was highlighted.

The Waste to Energy facility at Javelin Park and the emissions generated from it were debated and it was confirmed that the performance of the facility in terms of waste streams, waste handling and energy generation is regularly reviewed. The facility consistently processes circa 130,000t of household waste a year so there is an ongoing need for it. The potential for heat offtake and further decarbonisation measures are reviewed annually with the provider. Approximately 50% of the incoming waste is biogenic which is classed as renewable. There is a good proportion of fossil fuel derived waste as well, largely plastics, but efforts are being made to reduce the percentage as much as possible through proactive engagement with central government and campaigns to raise consumer awareness and encourage behaviour which reduces residual waste streams. The principal reason for developing the facility was to move Gloucestershire away from landfill operations which have a much higher carbon contribution.

Concerns were expressed regarding the emissions arising from the biogenic waste component. Officers explained that the 50% figure is derived by OFGEM as part of the REGO (Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin) certification process and the facility is operating in line with current OFGEM guidance. Additional points were made regarding waste to energy facilities needing a waste stream to operate dis-incentivising waste reduction and also the assumptions on carbon emissions generated by the grid which informed the original business case. The national grid has decarbonised faster than anticipated and so there is a need to challenge whether the rationale underpinning the business case still held true. It was reiterated that the main rationale for the facility was to move away from landfill and not as a means of renewable energy generation. The facility is classed as 50% renewable in line with national policy.

The facility is designed and scaled to handle the residual waste left over after recycling. The business case assumed higher levels of recycling than we are currently achieving at present and operation of the facility is not reliant on a minimum tonnage of waste inputs. There is therefore no benefit in not dealing with waste further up the waste management hierarchy and the partnership remains committed to the principles of reduce, re-use, recycle which are at the heart of the hierarchy.

The viability of the facility was queried should recycling rates substantially improve and residual waste volumes decrease and at what rates/levels the tipping point on viability might lie. The focus on reduce, re-use, recycle will remain and there is some headroom built into the contract. Should there be any input shortfall the County Council does have the option of sourcing third party waste but it is considered that this scenario is unlikely to arise in the near future and the clear objective is to handle the county's waste in-county rather than looking at import/export arrangements.

A question was asked about our understanding of how commercial waste is being handled across the county since there is no requirement for Local Authorities to collect it. There is actually reasonably good data on commercial waste volumes as operators, as part of their licencing arrangements, are required to provide data on their movement of waste. The Waste Data Interrogator tool is updated annually and this can be used to provide data on movements and flows of commercial waste in and out of the county and there is a requirement for this data to inform the waste management provision for the county as part of the Waste Local Plan.

The partnership has already achieved the easy carbon reduction actions. The next steps will involve collective decisions regarding things such as:

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- A single collection methodology using the services provided by UBICO, but
- Partners' fleet procurement timetables are not aligned
- Aligning collection methodologies will involve additional costs for some partners

DEFRA have set out dates for responding to some of the consultations but not all. The Environment Act sets out some strategic headline targets on waste which are meant to be in place by October 31st this year but detailed targets below these have yet to be communicated. Some of the ideas that have been consulted on are unviable (plastic film collection for example as there is no end market).

The collection of garden waste and food waste was discussed and whether we should be doing more to encourage home composting. Across the county there are differing and strong views on what the best approach is taking into account our rural and urban geographies. For some authorities the garden waste collection service provides a valuable source of revenue to help fund waste services generally. If collection authorities are required to offer a free service this will create additional financial burdens.

Once government guidance is clearer the Waste theme will be able to bring forwards some clearer recommendations for CLG to consider.

6. Thematic Updates Report (Paper 3)

The Secretariat highlighted that there were a small number of themes for which there was no update report or a short update report this time around and that this was due to officer capacity constraints which were starting to be exposed as a result of CLGs work programme. There had been a few personnel changes recently which have affected some themes and the Secretariat has begun a mid-year review process with theme leads to take stock of how themes are progressing with the aim of reporting on any findings which emerge at the September meeting.

A proposal within the Adaptation theme update report that the Adaptation and Biodiversity themes be merged was queried. It was noted that Adaptation went beyond biodiversity and nature-based solutions to include adapting the built environment to climate change and there were also linkages to other themes and the Food and Farming theme in particular.

The Secretariat responded that it was becoming clear that there is a need to review the current thematic structure to CLGs work programme, not least because of the resource constraints which are becoming clearer, but that now was not the time as the Group had not yet discussed all 10 themes. The appropriate point at which to review the themes was once the first deep dive sessions and all been completed and there was support for this as an approach.

Cotswold are committed to hosting a local event to bring the farming community together with national experts on low carbon land management. Planning for the event has been delayed but Cotswold are hoping to arrange it this coming autumn and to show how a local authority can use its convening role to connect farmers who want to do more for the climate/biodiversity with expert advisors in a positive way.

Climate Leadership Gloucestershire approved the Updates Report:

7. Meeting Notes of the Last Meeting (Paper 4)

The Secretariat highlighted that Meeting Notes for April's meeting were on the agenda for final sign off. Members of the Group had previously had the opportunity to review them and the feedback received had been incorporated into the meeting notes now presented.

There was an outstanding action from the April meeting for CLG to agree a Position Statement on Decarbonising Transport. A draft statement had been prepared and circulated to members ahead of the meeting and CLG were asked to agree the text.

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The Chair reminded CLG members of the need to communicate the recommendations/ position statements which CLG agree from meeting to meeting with respective Leaders/Chairs, Cabinet/Board Members, and Senior Officers.

Climate Leadership Gloucestershire approved the Meeting Notes and these will now be made publicly available in line with the approved Working Principles.

Climate Leadership Gloucestershire also unanimously approved the Transport Position Statement.

8. CLG Action Tracking Report (Paper 5)

The Secretariat introduced the action tracking report which had been produced to ensure that the key actions agreed by CLG were not overlooked and to give CLG the necessary assurance that progress was being made.

The Secretariat highlighted Action 21/02. The test webpages have been circulated and some comments have been made and any further comments were requested prior to the pages going live. In response to a suggestion from Cllr Turner the Secretariat reported that he was working on some ideas to make CLG's web presence more engaging and more human.

With regard to Action 22/03 interim arrangements were now in place following the LNP Manager's departure but there will inevitably be some slippage regarding the biodiversity theme.

Climate Leadership Gloucestershire noted the Action Tracking Report and the good progress being made.

9. CLG Revised Forward Look (Paper 6)

The Secretariat highlighted that the September meeting would consider the Adaptation and Food & Farming Themes.

10. Any other climate business

The Secretariat highlighted the forthcoming Transport Decarbonisation Forum event on July 19th. Places were still available and it is important that there is strong representation from CLG members as the output from the event will play a pivotal role in developing the transport decarbonisation actions under the Strategic Climate Action Plan.

The Secretariat briefed CLG on the approved Terms of Reference as they apply to engaging in external communications/correspondence. The Terms of Reference allow CLG to demonstrate leadership in lobbying on matters relevant to its remit without the need for prior approval from individual partners.