

# Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 8th December, 2022

MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND  
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Walsh (Chairperson);  
Councillors Bower, de Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson,  
Gormley, Maghie, McCabe, McCann, McKeown,  
McLaughlin, Murray, Sandford, Smyth, Spratt  
and Thompson.

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;  
Ms. D. Caldwell, Commissioner for Climate and City  
Resilience;  
Mr. K. Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti Poverty;  
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager;  
Mr. J. McKearney, Project Support Assistant;  
Mr. R. McLernon, Climate Programme Manager;  
Ms. C. Young, Marketing and Communications  
Co-ordinator;  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer.

## **Apologies**

Apologies for an inability to attend were received from Councillors Hutchinson and Newton.

## **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 10th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st December.

## **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

## **Update on Belfast achieving an A listing from the Carbon Disclosure Project**

The Climate Programme Manager referred Members of the Committee to the report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting, that outlined the 2022 CDP award of A status to Belfast, which followed the 2021 CDP award of B status to Belfast. He reminded Members of the Committee that in July 2021, the Council had made the first annual submission to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) – ICLEI reporting platform, and that an update was provided to the Council in October 2021. The submission was undertaken to support baselining of activity and emissions in

Belfast, and to enable full participation by Belfast in global climate action campaigns such as the Race to Zero, which linked to COP climate negotiations, the Cities Race to Resilience campaign, Cities Race to Zero campaign, the Global Covenant of Mayors, and the WWF One Planet City competition. All of these campaigns required members to have made a submission through a recognised reporting mechanism, of which CDP – ICLEI was the most well-known.

He explained that a city submission to CDP illustrated the level of ambition, activity and transparency each city adopted. Belfast had made its submission public in both submission years ensuring maximum openness and transparency around its plans. The Belfast submission in 2021 was the first time Belfast had participated in CDP, and were congratulated on having achieved a B ranking at such an early stage. In 2022, the second submission had achieved an A ranking and CDP officials had made a point of appearing on local media to mark the rapid advancement of the city in their framework.

In 2022 Belfast had updated on the adoption of city targets for achieving net zero which had been recommended in the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap (2020). These committed the city to a 66% reduction of emissions on 2000 levels by 2025, an 80% reduction by 2030 and a 100% reduction by 2050. In addition, Belfast was able to point to adaptation targets, including the planting of one million trees by 2035 and for the Living with Water Programme the delivery target of 2033, along with monitoring arrangements for both projects.

Belfast had made a strong link between the climate risks such as flooding and heat as set out in the Belfast Climate Risk Assessment and project delivery through initiatives including Belfast One Million Trees Project which addressed a range of targets, including carbon capture, avoided water runoff, reduced levels of heat, improved biodiversity and improved health and wellbeing for residents of Belfast having planted 65,000 trees in 2 years of delivery, funding the first Belfast I-TREE ECO report which provided an analysis of the benefits of the existing Belfast trees of Belfast, part funding the new Belfast Tree Strategy, funding new infrastructure including the development of a tree nursery at Grovelands, and funding The Conservation Volunteers and Belfast Hills Partnership.

A Member raised concerns in relation to the planting of trees through the One Million Trees Project and proposed that officers come back in February with a report on the management procedures and policies of the One Million Trees project. In particular, seeking focus on what, if any, ecological assessments were being made of sites on which trees had already been planted or going forward in the future that included site selection, bio security measures, monitoring work and what consultation was sought for specialist and technical advice on these matters. Officers agreed to bring a report to the February meeting of the Committee detailing the management processes and assessment criteria used for the 1000 trees project.

The Committee note the information which had been provided and agreed to support the annual submission by Belfast through this internationally recognised carbon and climate reporting framework.

### **Update on the Local Area Energy Plan for Belfast**

The Climate and City Resilience Commissioner referred the Committee to the report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting and advised the Members that the purpose of the report was to update them on the current status of activities to develop a Local Area Energy Plan for Belfast.

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

### **Proposed District Heating Network for Belfast**

The Climate and City Resilience Commissioner referred the Committee to the report that was circulated in advance of the meeting and advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on the current status of activities to develop a district heating network in Belfast. She advised that a further update would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee. Members raised the matter of the role of planning in promoting District Heat Networks and asked for an update from planning to be added as a regular item on the agenda. Members of the Committee asked officers to bring back a report outlining the options for community heating and what Belfast City Council can do in relation to this matter.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report.

### **Innovate UK funding opportunity – UK Net zero living: Pioneer places fund**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy referred members of the Committee to the report he had circulated in advance of the meeting and advised the Members of the Committee that the purpose of the report was to inform them of an application to the UK Net Zero Living: Pioneer Places Fund.

After discussion, Members of the Committee noted the contents of the report.

### **Update on proposed climate literacy Training for elected members**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy referred the Committee to the report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting. He advised the purpose of the report was to provide Members with information on the proposed Carbon Literacy Training.

He stated that the course was appropriate for all Councillors, whatever their political world view. By the end, elected members would understand the climate science that underpinned the action the Council had taken to speak confidently and knowledgeably on the subject. Most importantly, they would understand how to talk about the climate crisis in a way that resonates with their voter base, and in a way that is authentic to their own political position.

The training would cover climate change, carbon footprints, how every person could do their bit, and how this topic related to Elected Members and ratepayers. An Elected Members' Toolkit provided during and after the training had been designed

to equip Councillors with the information they would need to mobilise change within their constituency and to communicate climate change effectively to hard-to-reach groups.

A full day was required to complete the training. This would be condensed slightly if completed remotely. It was proposed the training would be delivered via MS Teams on Thursday 12th January from 5.30 pm to 8.30 pm, and on Saturday 14th January from 9.00 am to 12.30 pm. The training would be interactive throughout and would be followed by a short exercise to complete. Following successful completion of the training and exercise, a Carbon Literate Certificate would be provided in a digital format. The training provider, Climate NI, were delivering the training as part of the Carbon Literacy Project.

The Committee agreed attendance on the proposed training dates.

### **Visit Belfast**

The Committee agreed to invite Visit Belfast to a future meeting of the Committee to present on sustainable tourism.

Chairperson