



Subject:	Site Visit to an Operational Heat Network – Leeds City Council
Date:	Friday 24 th October 2025
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officer:	Debbie Caldwell, Climate Commissioner

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To seek approval for an Elected Member site visit to an operational Heat Network in Leeds.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to:

	<p>I. Note the potential costs and outline itinerary.</p> <p>II. Approve travel for Elected Members to begin preparations for a site visit to Leeds City Council.</p> <p>III. Note that dates for a Q1 2026 visit will be confirmed subject to approval of this proposed visit.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Purpose of the visit</p> <p>The purpose of the visit is to provide members with an opportunity to visit an operational heat network and learn about the development process, hurdles and benefits.</p>
3.2	<p>Proposed Heat Network</p> <p>BCC officers from the climate team have engaged many other Local Authorities in GB who have been through a similar development process for a Heat Network. Each heat network development is bespoke, as each council has different assets, geography, technology opportunities, financial landscape and city partnerships.</p>
3.3	<p>Leeds PIPES is a heat network led by Leeds City Council and is considered the most suitable for a Heat Network site visit at this time. The Heat network delivers heat from a Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility to both residential homes and public buildings via underground insulated pipes.</p>
3.4	<p>Leeds PIPES development began in 2018 and has progressed into its third phase beginning in 2022. So far 30km of network has been installed with 4,000 homes and public buildings connected, however it has been developed with future expansion in mind.</p>
3.5	<p>The project has been delivered by Leeds City Council in partnership with Vital Energi with support from central government grant funding. The anchor loads included Leeds Town Hall, Leeds Beckett University and several other Council buildings.</p>
3.6	<p>Belfast City centre heat network</p> <p>The Belfast City Centre Heat Network project recently completed the initial high-level technical, legal and commercial feasibility stages. As part of the process, the Climate Team have been in contact with a number of local authorities to better understand the different delivery models for a heat network.</p>
3.7	<p>This visit will provide an opportunity for Elected Members and Directors to visit an operational heat network to better understand the land use policy context and support provided by the Council, the delivery model, the technology and operation of the network as well as to understand how it has affected local businesses and communities. Participants will also be able to speak to some of the users and operators of the heat network to develop an</p>

	understanding of the challenges and benefits of delivering a heat network project. These insights will help to inform decision makers on whether the Belfast Heat Network is to progress to a more detailed stage of feasibility.
3.8	The Leeds PIPES heat network involved a physical retrofit of old historic buildings (similar to those in Belfast) and uses heat generated from an energy from waste plant. As there is currently no such plant in Belfast, other technology options have been considered in the feasibility.
3.9	The Leeds PIPES also took a long-term approach to securing a return on the initial capex investment and thus were able to set a lower tariff for heat. This also allowed Leeds to double their heat off-takers within 7 years, leading to more favourable financial returns. This is considered the most appropriate network to visit as the initial market engagement suggests that the price of heat will be a key determinant securing off-takers and hence the Leeds delivery model would be of interest to CMT and elected members.
3.10	Proposed attendees Proposed attendees would comprise: Party Group Leaders or their nominees, Committee Chairs, Directors and Senior officers. We would plan to have 12-15 confirmed attendees.
3.11	Proposed date BCC Officers will engage directly with Leeds City Council to develop an itinerary with a view to securing a date in Q1 2026.
3.12	Financial and Resource Implications Costs for the site visits will be met via the existing City and Organisational Strategy budget. It is estimated that the costs will be in the region of £250 per attendee.
3.13	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment There are no equality or good relations / rural needs implications associated with this report
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	None