

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE
25TH JANUARY 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Climate Change Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a remote meeting on Wednesday, 25th January 2023.

PRESENT: Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson (Chairman)

Councillors: Gillian Brockley, Steve Copple, Mared Eastwood, Chrissy Gee, Ian Hodge, Roz Mansell, Allan Marshall, Carolyn Preece, Dan Rose, Jason Shallcross and Sam Swash.

SUBSTITUTION:

Councillor David Coggins-Cogan (for Councillor Mared Eastwood who had to leave the meeting).

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy, Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy), Programme Manager (Climate Change and Carbon Reduction), Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer.

APOLOGIES

Councillor Jason Shallcross for the first part of the meeting.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Copple declared a personal interest as a previous employee of Shell and received a pension contribution.

Councillor Hodge declared a personal interest as a previous employee of BP and received a pension contribution.

The Chair advised that Councillors who were members of the Clwyd Pension Fund would have a personal interest which would be noted by Democratic Services.

9. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2022 were moved by Councillor Mared Eastwood and seconded by Councillor Gillian Brockley as a correct record.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

10. CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW AND PROGRESS

The Programme Manager (Climate Change and Carbon Reduction) presented the report and provided a presentation which included detailed information on the following slides:-

- Context – following Welsh Government declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019 Flintshire County Council committed to developing a Climate Change Strategy and becoming carbon neutral by to 2030
- Achievements so far
- Development of the Strategy – Baseline
- Development of the Strategy – Engagement
- The Strategy sets out to achieve net zero carbon
- Climate Change Strategy
- Action Plan to Net Zero Carbon
- Current Staff Resource for Programme
- Governance Structure
- 2021/22 Progress Report
- Recommendations
- Priorities for 2023/24

The Cabinet Member congratulated the Programme Manager for the work she had undertaken. The Committee needed to be mindful of the workload of the Programme Manager and her apprentice.

In response to questions from Councillor Eastwood, the Programme Manager firstly confirmed that the increases in procurement was directly related to the increases in spend for 2021/22. Referring to the net zero school, she provided an overview of the requirements which had been put in place when building the school to ensure that more accurate carbon figures were obtained and that these were the figures that would be reported rather than the spend value of the contract.

In response to a question from Councillor Dan Rose, the Programme Manager explained the term “well to tank” referred to the emissions from the drilling and transportation of oil prior to it being sold at petrol stations. Once the use of fossil fuels was reduced then the “well to tank” emissions would also reduce.

The Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) referred to Councillor Eastwood’s point on hydrogen fuel, saying that as part of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board a hydrogen production site was sourced on the Deeside Industrial Park, focussing on using hydrogen for vehicles. Because of the number of businesses on the park there was a desire to switch with the focus on Green Hydrogen. He explained if renewable energy was used to create the hydrogen, there was no bi-product of carbon dioxide, and he outlined the differences between blue and green hydrogen. He suggested that this could be considered as an item on the Forward Work Programme.

In response to the question from Councillor Copple on best practice, the Programme Manager confirmed that best practice was always sought, providing details of the organisations she was involved with where best practice examples were shared. In addition, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) were working to develop a procurement toolkit which all local authorities could use. This would however require a dedicated officer to work with the commissioners and supply chain to gain a better understanding of what their carbon emissions were.

In response to a question from Councillor Mansell, the Programme Manager confirmed the baseline figure for emissions was for 2018/19. The 2019/20 data was pre-Covid. The 2020/21 data showed reduced travel and office use during the pandemic. In 2021/22 coming out of the pandemic, data had seen some increase in emissions from the previous year, but aside from procurement, still showed reductions from the 2018/19 baseline.

In response to a question from the Chair on procurement with larger contracts and offsetting emissions, the Programme Manager confirmed that the school referred to was a pilot and a learning curve for moving forward.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

11. MOTION CARBON FOOTPRINT OF HOMEWORKING

The motion was proposed by the Chair and seconded by Councillor Brockley.

Councillor Eastwood felt that there were several statements about what Flintshire County Council did or did not do but there was no report from officers to support it. She felt that the Committee was being asked to make a recommendation on unsubstantiated statements without any knowledge of what the resources or cost implications were and therefore could not support the motion as she could not be confident that all the required information had been captured.

Councillor Copple felt the Committee had a large workload and he was unsure how important this aspect was. He felt home working had its advantages in relation to reduced carbon emissions but questioned if there were more important things the Committee should be focussed on.

Councillor Marshall concurred with the comments made by Councillor Eastwood.

Councillor Rose said he had investigated how, as a lone home worker, this had impacted on his own carbon footprint. He could not find any benefit for an individual working from home given the increased heating costs for a single person property against a multiple person property. The only benefit being if another person was also working at home. He explained that what was being suggested was obtaining more accurate information on the home working policies and writing to Welsh Government (WG). He was happy to support those requests as it required clarification and was something that this Committee could suggest was actioned to ensure that the correct figures on regards carbon footprints were reported.

The Chief Officer commented on recommendation 3 and said the modern office at Ty Dewi Sant in Ewloe was not designed for all the workforce to return. There was not enough capacity but it could hold 70% of the workforce. He explained that the Hybrid Working Policy required managers to strike a balance

between the business need and the needs of the person working from home. He accepted that the carbon footprint of home working and hybrid working was important but it was more complex to manage with the carbon footprint being not the only element. He suggested the Committee consider the most recent Hybrid Working Policy and agreed to share this with Members.

Councillor Mansell had that concerns that offices were being heated with only a few people in them.

Councillor Eastwood clarified her concerns on the motion but added that she was happy to support the item being placed on the Forward Work Programme.

Councillor Rose explained that the motion was not suggesting a change to the Hybrid Working Policy but was to ensure the data was accurate within the Policy. He said that if a survey was carried out with staff to glean the required information, then that would be sufficient for this purpose.

The Programme Manager referred to the recommendations saying that currently the impact on carbon emissions both travelling to and from work and working from home were not detailed in the Hybrid Working Policy. A balance of those impacts was important to maintaining carbon reduction behaviours. She then referred to recommendation 2, the commissioning of a travel survey which was the method recommended by WG when determining accurate employee commuting data. Adopting a review of comparable evidence from elsewhere would divert the council from the WG prescribed methodology and she suggested updating the recommendation to reflect that.

On recommendation 4 the Programme Manager said the updated guidance and methodology for calculating home working emissions did reflect seasonal variation and it was for the Council to demonstrate that steps had been taken to influence the reduction in emissions. The Council should determine if it was to extend the baseline for in scope emissions from the 2018/19 data which did not include homeworking. She recommended that consideration be given to including that data in scope once the Council had carried out the commissioned survey.

The Chair as proposer of this motion then proceeded to sum up. He referred to each of the recommendations.

Referring to recommendation 1 the Chair, said that this was requesting Cabinet to review the Home Working Policy and did not make any representation on what that policy should include. This was a broad policy with numerous other factors which had to be considered. What the Committee was required to do was to ensure that climate change and carbon reduction was considered in every aspect of the Council's work and that Cabinet considered this at the forefront when writing policies to ensure it considered how carbon could be best reduced. When information was gathered from all committees and interested parties such as trade unions that information should be incorporated into developing policies.

On the second recommendation and following the comments made by the Programme Manager the Chair was happy to delete the line "or a review of

comparable evidence from elsewhere in the UK if similar studies are already available". He received confirmation from the seconder Councillor Brockley that she agreed. The motion was carried.

Flintshire County Council Climate Change Committee resolved:

1. To recommend that Cabinet reviewed the Home Working Policy, establishing a coherent and climate-informed framework for the council.
2. To recommend to Cabinet that a study was commissioned in respect of total net emissions from homeworking, in the form of a survey of Flintshire staff as per Welsh Government guidance
3. To recommend that as an interim measure pending the completion of a review of the climate evidence, the council should allow anyone who wished to work from the office in Winter to do so, particularly considering rising heating costs, and
4. To instruct the Chair to write to the Welsh Government's Climate Change Minister requesting that a mechanism that accurately reflected seasonal variation in net homeworking emissions was included in the guidance for assessing emissions, such that the council was not penalised for taking steps to reduce total emissions at the expense of those that show on its own figures.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations and minutes of the meeting to be forwarded to Cabinet.

12. MOTION PRINT FREE COUNCIL

The Chair invited Councillor Rose as proposer of this motion to speak. Councillor Rose thanked the IT Infrastructure Manager for the information he had provided which helped identify the 4.9m pages which had been printed by the Council in 2022. He had not asked for the number of letters sent but the revision on what was printed which would impact the fiscal costs for paper income and postage also. He said a 10g letter sent was responsible for 280g of carbon if the receiver recycled it and provided an example of an unnecessary letter recently sent to all Members. There were 70 xerox printers within the Council which were currently up for review and he wanted to ensure that a reduction in the carbon footprint was considered within this review and not just the cost basis.

The Cabinet Member referred to the exceptions for printing and felt more could be included. He referred to a body which promoted tourism within Flintshire and advocated the leaflets they printed which highlighted the heritage aspects within Flintshire which could be placed in areas outside of the county to attract tourism.

Councillor Eastwood would have welcomed an officer report on this to understand how much paper was used, the electrical input used and answer questions on why xerox were used over inkjet printers. An update from HR on the transition to a paperless Council would also have been useful. She was supportive in general moving towards a paperless Council wherever possible but was concerned that some areas may have not been included. She asked if the

motion could include which printers were used in procurement and in house and referred to the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan item CCB4 on the volume of paper used in printing services.

Councillor Attridge, in attendance as an observer, concurred with the views of Councillor Eastwood saying that the lack of detail and officer involvement did not enable a debate on this.

The Chair then provided information on the process of motions and how they were moved by Councillors. Officers were able to provide advice before a decision was made in writing or in person at meetings. He reiterated that this Committee did not have decision making powers on making recommendations or suggestions to Cabinet, for example, where more officer involvement would be provided.

Councillor Marshall sought clarification on the energy consumption figures asking if they were based on fossil fuels and asked if solar panels were used to generate the electricity would this mean they did not generate carbon. He then referred to the recent Council meeting where notices of motions were read from sheets of paper. This did not fit into the restrictive category within the motion and asked if this should be expanded to include sheets used in the Council meetings.

Councillor Rose said this was looking at the Council's activities and said that having something printed for an individual which was necessary for a meeting was different to the Council sending paper out which was unnecessary. Cabinet had the authority to expand those areas but it was not possible to currently remove 100% of paper.

The Chair spoke in favour of the motion saying it was for Cabinet to make and add more exemptions to the recommendations. He felt that this was a good starting point for a discussion within the Council on unnecessary printing. A lot of printing was undertaken corporately and he understood that there were cases where it was necessary and sensible to have printed backups especially for digital records. The exemptions were broad and the Committee was asking Cabinet to set policy guidelines across the whole Council to reduce the amount of paper used and carbon generated producing and mailing it.

The Programme Manager reported on the Member Workshops held in February 2019 and the Senior Leaders' Academi held in March 2021 where feedback was received specific to paper use. Members commented on the need to use less paper utilising iPads to reduce paper use. Senior Leaders commented on the need to work paperless and force change to save energy and reduce waste in terms of none or less printing of documents and the development of online forms. She then referred to CCB4 in the Climate Change Action Plan which stated, "Facilitate transition towards a 'paperless Council' through, for example, digitisation of wage slips, report packs, contracts, applications." This was an ongoing body of work identifying large scale printing and assessing the options and feasibility for digitisation. She said that through the Action Plan and the development of the Council's Digital Strategy in 2022 changes were made to the way Members accessed meeting report packs with Members using an iPad and laptop to attend virtual meetings and view the report pack at the same time.

The report packs were not printed unless specially requested. Further digitisation of current paper documents and forms was being reviewed within the Digital Strategy focussing on the digital customer, digital workforce, digital business and connectivity, digital information and data management and digital delivery. She then outlined the restrictions on what could be digitised. Moving to the printing policy she explained that each portfolio would need to be consulted to understand the service needs of the customer and ensure compliance with legislation was maintained. The paper used by the council for printing was recyclable from sustainable paper sources with provision for recycling in offices and printer locations. The printers utilised within the Council were currently under a hire contract with xerox and the Council was currently reviewing its stock of printers to reflect its needs moving forward. Consumables were returned to Xerox as part of their recycling scheme and she outlined the work of the Xerox Green World Alliance.

The Chief Officer sought the Committee's expectations on how it felt the motions should be reported to Cabinet. If there was a trend for these, he felt that a process should be agreed. He suggested that the minutes and resolutions be sent to Cabinet as the most effective way forward. The Chair felt that when this Committee made recommendations that it was a matter for Cabinet to confirm how they wished to consider them, either by taking them forward or merely just to note them.

Councillor Attridge felt that it was paramount that there should be a Legal Officer present at Climate Change Committee meetings to provide advice and for the protection of Members.

The Chair said agendas were published well in advance and that it was the responsibility of the Head of Democratic Services to collect and collate motions and that all officers were welcome to attend this Committee. Having seen the agenda the Monitoring Officer had made the decision not to attend this was not a Committee that he would routinely attend. He asked the Committee if they would wish to adjourn to enable legal advice to be provided.

Councillor Eastwood raised a point on recommendations to Cabinet as at the start of the meeting the presentation stated that this committee sat under the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee. She was concerned about the Committee's reputation in making recommendations which covered a lot of work which was already being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with no reference to it. She put forward an amendment that the motion should be adjourned pending submission of an officer report detailing what was already being considered by other Committees.

The Chair clarified that the Climate Change Committee did not sit under the Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He sought clarification on Councillor Eastwood's amendment. Councillor Eastwood suggested the recommendation be changed to "that an officer report be requested outlining the issues covered in the motion to enable to committee to evaluate and make a recommendation based on that report". This was seconded by Councillor Ian Hodge.

Following a vote the amendment was lost.

The Cabinet Member reiterated his earlier concerns saying the Committee had to recognise the workload of officers and prioritise suggestions for motions.

The Chief Officer asked for clarity on the way forward saying that whatever the resolutions were, he suggested they would be included in the minutes and sent to Cabinet which was agreed. The Chief Officer would forward the recommendations and minutes to Cabinet.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried.

Flintshire County Council Climate Change Committee resolved:

The Committee recommended to Cabinet that a policy be implemented across all departments setting out that printing should only be considered where:

- There is a statutory requirement to provide information in printed form.
- A disabled staff member or service user requires material in printed form because they are disabled.
- A staff member or service user required material in printed form because they are digitally excluded.
- The relevant Chief Officer had directed that a paper backup of the document was necessary for service resilience, or
- For the purposes of advertising a service or change in service to the public; and
- That all paper, toners, inks and consumables procured be made of recycled materials and recycled after use.
- The committee also called on the Cabinet to initiate an efficiency review of the current stock of printers owned or operated by the council with a view to rationalising these to the minimum strictly necessary.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations and minutes of the meeting to be forwarded to Cabinet

13. MOTION COLUMBARIA IN FLINTSHIRE MANAGED CEMETERIES - ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

The Chair invited Councillor Swash as mover of this motion to speak.

Councillor Swash explained that, whilst this motion was specifically concerning Columbaria, the issue of dealing with human remains was a pressing one. Traditional burials were an inefficient way of storing human remains, with built up urban communities experiencing problems for a long time and that this was now beginning to affect Flintshire.

The motion outlined several potential benefits with using Columbaria at Flintshire managed cemeteries and he focussed on the environmental benefits which was critical because of the lack of burial spaces at our popular cemeteries. The burial of human remains was carbon intensive and took up vast sways of green space which could be better utilised. He outlined the types of land which would be unsuitable to be used for burials saying as Columbaria was an above

ground piece of architecture which used less space it was more versatile in terms of the land upon which it could be built.

Land used for traditional burials could not be utilised for other purposes in the long term as very few developers were interested in building on land made up of human remains. When land was allocated for potential cemeteries, it had to be understood that it was unlikely to be used for anything else. The costs of maintaining cemeteries were high with many older cemeteries left in a state of disrepair with volunteers looking after them. Columbaria were already present in many cemeteries in the UK, and he provided information on the popular site in Northwich, extending the life of that cemetery. Referring to Resomation he said it was a different way of dealing with human remains and was included for the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet to explore its potential as a longer-term option.

This was seconded by Councillor Rose who said land use was an important part of the Committee's work and this motion focused on land use and space taken up. Burial grounds could be required for building as there was a shortage of land which would be needed for the future. He was pleased that Resomation could be considered as an option and that Flintshire now had the option of woodland burials. Providing more options to people was not only better for them but also for land use and the environment.

Councillor Eastwood sought clarification on where the information on the shortage of space in cemeteries had been obtained, where was the officer report and who could she ask questions to. In relation to Columbaria, she asked what the costs and resources implications were and asked if there was a demand for this in Flintshire in comparison with other local authorities. Referring to woodland burials she asked how this impacted on biodiversity within those woodland and meadow lands. She appreciated the amount of work Councillor Swash had put into the motion but felt officer representatives should be available to answer questions.

The Programme Manager explained that Flintshire's Bereavement Team regularly monitored the available burial space to ensure its capacity was suitable to meet demand. Work was currently being undertaken at Hawarden and Buckley Cemeteries with both having approximately four years remaining at current usage rates, with Bagillt having 16 years remaining. A report on cemetery capacity would be presented to Cabinet in February 2023.

The national trend was 75% cremation to 25% burial but Flintshire's trend remained at 70% burial to 30% cremation and those trends were regularly monitored and analysed by Flintshire's Bereavement Services but there was no indication that demand was likely to change. She explained that Columbaria had a smaller footprint for a larger number of cremated remains to be stored but were not widely used within cemetery settings in Wales. She explained that whilst consideration could be given to Columbaria utilising space within cemetery settings, this would incur capital expenditure for the purchase of the structure and infrastructure costs for its installation.

Flintshire currently offered a wide range of options including traditional burial, natural burial, cremated remains, scattering and a garden of remembrance

but consideration could also be given to Columbaria. The introduction would not reduce the lack of burial spaces and if the trend did not change pressure would continue for the supply of burial grounds.

Referring to the resolutions she said the use of Columbaria could be used for the above ground storage of remains in Flintshire and could be considered as part of the extension plans for Hawarden cemetery, which was Flintshire's main cemetery, and that the potential usage could be gauged before any further roll out. Referring to the second option she said Resomation was a more environmentally friendly option and currently used in the USA but few local authorities in the UK had started to consider the process. Because of the necessary permits and permissions to run such an operation this option was a few years away. Flintshire could consider this through the work undertaken as part of the APSE Cemetery and Crematorium Network Group, but significant investment was required. Should the long-term option be to use Resomation, that would secure income for the Council.

Councillor Swash said he felt a lot of the questions raised by Councillor Eastwood had been answered. He concurred with the option for the Council securing income should Resomation be used and he felt there was an opportunity for Flintshire to lead in that area. It was inevitable that the county would run out of burial space and by not dealing with it now would only make the problem worse in the future.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried.

Flintshire County Council Climate Change Committee resolved:

1. To recommend to Cabinet and the Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee that Flintshire County Council offer Columbaria as an option for residents as part of its suite of bereavement and burial services
2. To recommend to Cabinet and the Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee that Flintshire County Council explore the viability of offering other environmentally friendly burial options, such as Resomation, in the longer term

RESOLVED:

That recommendations and minutes of the meeting to be forwarded to Cabinet.

14. MOTION FLOOD RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION

The Chair proposed this motion and said that no recommendations would be made on this item. This was for the Committee to undertake work to investigate future flooding issues that the County currently experienced and may face in the future because of climate change.

There was a range of flooding issues with some being the responsibility of local authorities, Natural Resources Wales, water and sewerage authorities and other agencies. There was a mixture of responsibilities concerning the upkeep of drainage channels and culverts etc. The situation was complex and it was not

always the responsibility of the Council to prevent flooding as a lot of the infrastructure required was the responsibility of other agencies under Welsh Government (WG).

The Council was able to look at the whole issue to identify where the failings and concerns were. It was difficult to predict where surface water and flooding would occur, with some areas experiencing it on a regular basis and others unexpectedly. This could be dealt with when it happened, or the Council could look at it to map out where the risks were and what action was needed to prevent flooding.

Within the Council's budget there was no room for massive infrastructure projects and if communities were going to be protected from flooding, then investment from WG and UK Government was required. It was a complicated issue, and the motion was to set up an inquiry where the Committee would hear detailed evidence from Flintshire Officers, Natural Resources Wales and other interested parties. The Committee could look at the issue in detail and make some representations based on the information received. The Chair said the motion was to set up the inquiry and no substantive recommendations would be proposed. He commended the Council for the work it had undertaken dealing with the recent flooding and long running issues at Sandycroft, Mancot and Pentre areas and referred to the difficulties encountered by Natural Resources Wales around funding. This area had particular challenges and could be a good case study.

This was seconded by Councillor Copple who felt flooding was getting worse and needed to be assessed and measures put in place for the longer term.

Councillor Eastwood asked if this duplicated the work undertaken in CCBu7 "to continue to carry out flood investigation and the number of flooding incidents prevented Flood Risk Planning". She also asked what would happen if no response was received from Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Water in time. She felt that she did not have sufficient skills to analyse an inquiry held by this Committee and would prefer an update from officers on what was already happening.

The Chief Officer confirmed that a lot of information was already available and that this was focussing on the Sandycroft incident which was ongoing. It was a complex issue involving a number of different partners. He referred to the resources that would be required to support this motion and said that it was not possible to hold a public inquiry into flooding incidents in Flintshire. Should an update and reflections on the Sandycroft incident be required, then this could be arranged for a future meeting of the Committee. He said that gathering evidence from Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Water could be an issue as they were not duty bound to provide anything. He that there were no resources within his team nor Democratic Services to facilitate an inquiry.

Councillor Mansell provided details of issues in her ward with blocked drains when it rained. It was agreed that the Chief Officer would liaise with Councillor Mansell outside of the meeting.

The Cabinet Member said he supported the sentiments of the motion and sought clarification as to who was responsible for what when it came to flooding

issues. In many wards there were antiquated systems for drainage and sewage and clarity was required when trying to establish who was responsible for these issues. He understood that there were still issues with recruitment within the Flood Resilience team. Although the focus had been on the area around Sandycroft he felt that lobbying WG for funding was required to deal with the infrastructure issues.

Councillor Swash spoke in favour of the motion and agreed that using Sandycroft, Mancot and Pentre would be a good case study. As local member for Hawarden and Mancot he said this area had been consistently affected with 30 minutes of heavy rainfall leading to severe flooding. The Council had carried out a lot of work, but he was concerned that with the upcoming development in Hawarden that any issues needed to be dealt with in advance of that development.

The Chair then moved to the vote which was unanimous.

Flintshire County Council Climate Change Committee resolved:

1. That the inquiry be established by the Committee on the basis set out as outlined in the motion
2. That provision is made for an oral evidence session, including a venue, in either April or May.

RESOLVED:

That the Chair of the Committee progress the recommendations above.

15. MOTION CLWYD PENSION FUND DIVESTMENT - 1

The Chair explained that this was brought to the last meeting but was not progressed. The purpose of the motion was to gather evidence and propose actions in light of expert advice. He referred to the comments made by the Programme Manager on public sector targets for net zero by 2030 in Wales which applied to all areas of the Council apart from the Clwyd Pension Fund which had no target at all.

Welsh Government (WG) were looking to bring Local Authority Pension Funds in line with the public sector and he thanked Jack Sargeant MS for his work in this area. The Chair reported on the investments held by the Pension Fund which had a duty to manage those investments for its members. He felt that the 2045 target set by the Clwyd Pension Fund was out of line with the rest of the public sector. There could be good arguments for this as it was a complex issue, and it was therefore necessary to seek expert advice. The motion was to ensure that this was received, and that the Committee was able to make suggestions to the Council as employers in relation to the Clwyd Pension Fund.

Councillor Rose commented that there was a lot of money and carbon involved and felt the Committee could make some suggestions to ensure it came in line with the public sector targets.

Councillor Hodge felt that, although he had doubts about the legality of looking at this, he was reassured that the investigation was regarding fossil fuels. He said that one of the reasons fossil fuel companies still produced it was because cars, heaters and boilers still used it and asked who was spending money to make us green. He said BP and Cemex owned Halkyn Quarry and were working to develop solutions to decarbonise the cement production process. BP had announced a 45% stake to project and lead the largest green hydrogen energy hub based in Australia and had also announced the green hydrogen production in Spain, Portugal and the UK. They had improved EV batteries for cars with Castrol and had just delivered the first solar project in India which included 200,000 solar panels. He welcomed that the Committee look into companies where investments were made by the Pension Fund but reiterated that companies such as BP and Shell still provided oil and gas because the demand was there, but they were also investing heavily in green alternatives to fossil fuels.

Councillor Shallcross reported that as a member of the Clwyd Pension Fund Committee he was confident in the work being undertaken by the officers to ensure that companies moved to greener energies. He felt it was in the company's best interests to become greener to survive but they needed a period of transition.

Councillor Gee reported on a recent news item "[makemymoneymatter.co.uk/green my pension](https://www.makemymoneymatter.co.uk/green-my-pension)" which highlighted the best way to cut an individual's carbon emissions to make their pension green.

Councillor Coggins Coggin understood that the Motion was to hold a low-level inquiry about potential divestment and looking at the companies in which the Clwyd Pension Fund held investments. He was not sure if any company was being singled out and felt the Committee was evidence gathering initially to consider what was received with no judgments made either way. He felt that no prejudgements were being made within the Motion.

Councillor Rose said this was the Climate Change Committee and that BP had been mentioned several times for its green washing techniques including spending £800,000 on digital advertising once a windfall tax was mentioned. It was well known that Xenon another large company spent a fortune in the 1970s covering up evidence that climate change was real. He agreed that it should be evidence based but that it should also include the £7b of profit made, saying what they were putting in to green was a pittance to ensure the climate change and reduction of carbon of that industry.

Councillor Marshall said the results would be interesting but felt the timescale was short for the report to be presented to the March meeting and suggested it be extended to March 2024.

The Chief Officer said he did not underestimate the importance the Pension Fund could have on our carbon footprint, but again stated that the Council did not have the resources to facilitate the inquiry which was proposed. It was possible to commission the first one, but it would not be possible to commission the second one.

The Chair referred to the comments made by Councillor Marshall and said this was drafted for the November 2022 meeting was now back before Members in an edited form. He recognised the need to extend the deadline for this but it could not be extended beyond the summer as there could be changes to the Committee. He proposed that the third recommendation be changed to July and asked if the seconder of the motion agreed, and Councillor Rose confirmed he did.

The Chief Officer reiterated that the Committee did not have the resources to carry out the inquiry properly which would jeopardise the principle and the process. The time frame was also a concern for arranging a group of people at a senior level together in a short period of time. This could have a negative effect on the Pension Scheme if we came back with the wrong answer based on an un-resourced Flintshire Officer team with people not turning up or sending the wrong people. It could end up being a waste of time, but he understood the reasons for the motion.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried.

Flintshire County Council Climate Change Committee resolved:

1. That the Committee commissions an inquiry into the climate performance and targets of the Clwyd Pension Fund.
2. That this inquiry shall take written and oral evidence as set out in section 3.
3. That the inquiry will report back to the committee at the July meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Chair of the Committee progress the recommendations above.

16. AREAS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME REVIEW

The Chair commented that this was on the Forward Work Programme for review at a later meeting. The Chair asked if any Members had any items that they would like more detail on and receive specialist advice on which could be included on the Climate Change Programme Review.

The Programme Manager felt the presentation provided a fair overview of areas that required development and hoped that Members of the Committee had digested the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and identified areas that needed particular attention. She was open to hear any suggestions.

Councillor Mansell asked if workshops would be considered for any suggestions put forward. In response the Programme Manager confirmed workshops had been provided prior to the Strategy being developed but none had taken place since it was approved. She felt if there were topics from Members which would benefit from a workshop, she would be happy to do that depending on capacity.

Councillor Shallcross commented that this was a new Committee and could benefit from assistance to manage expectations. Climate change was one of the biggest subjects affecting the world and the Committee needed to understand what could be achieved. The motions presented were done so with the best intentions but could involve a tremendous amount of work to potentially get nothing in return. The Committee needed to be led and guided in a direction where it could make a difference. A workshop may be useful to ensure all Members of the Committee had the correct understanding of what was required.

The Programme Manager referred to the part of the recommendation to Cabinet which was that priority be given to elected Members and senior officers to carry out carbon literacy training which would link directly to the Climate Change Strategy. This would hopefully provide the information and understanding required to properly inform decisions.

RESOLVED:

That the areas for review within the Climate Change Programme be agreed.

17. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair referred to the Forward Work Programme which included items for the next three meetings before the summer. The July meeting allowed for other items suggested by Members to be included. The Programme Manager confirmed that Hydrogen was included for the March meeting and could be broadened to include the comments made by Councillor Eastwood which was agreed.

Councillor Coggins Cogan said he owned an electric vehicle and following a trip to Scotland, he explained that the Scottish Government had, to assist with tourism, ensure that there was an excellent charging network. He felt there was scope for Flintshire which could maybe be used for tourism as the Gateway to Wales similar to what Denbighshire were doing with their EV station called the Gateway to Snowdonia.

Councillor Marshall asked if ground source or bore hole heat pumps extracting heat from large former coal areas which had tunnels full of warm water could be considered. The Programme Manager confirmed the Council had been installing heat pumps in some domestic properties and some schools. There was an item on the Forward Work Programme for the meeting May to look at alternative renewable energy generation opportunities and that could be broadened to include renewable heat options. The Chair asked if what Councillor Marshall was proposing would be for private sector investment. The Programme Manager said she would look into it provide a response. The Chair suggested that it be provisionally broadened to include it for May with a decision being taken on whether to broaden the item at the meeting in March.

On being put to the vote the Forward Work Programme was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be approved;

- (b) That the Programme Manager liaise with the Chair and Vice-Chair following the meeting to discuss the Forward Work Programme; and
- (c) That consideration be given at the meeting in March whether to broaden the item on alternative renewable energy generation.

18. FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meeting dates of the Climate Change Committee had been scheduled to take place at 2.00 pm on:

Tuesday 28 March 2023

Tuesday 23 May 2023

Tuesday 18 July 2023

19. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no Members of the press or public in attendance.

The meeting started at 2.00pm and finished at 4.46pm

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Chairman