

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 13th June, 2024

MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM

Members present: Councillor R-M Donnelly (Chairperson);
Councillors Anglin, Bell, Bradley, Bower, R. Brooks,
T. Brooks, Bunting, M. Donnelly, S. Douglas, Flynn,
McAteer, McCabe and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. D. Caldwell, Climate Commissioner;
Ms. C. Shortt, Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer;
Ms. C. Persic, Development Manager;
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance
Coordinator.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman McCoubrey and Councillors Doherty and Long.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11th April were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Flynn declared an interest to agenda item 3. Belfast Festival of Learning Food Data Hackathon, in that Allstate, the organisation for which he worked for was referenced in the report.

A Declaration of Interest was received from Councillor T. Brooks under agenda item 2. Horizon Europe Urban Planning 2030 (UP2030) Update, in that her employer Queen's University Belfast was referenced in the report.

Horizon Europe Urban Planning 2030 (UP2030) Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on the ongoing activities as part of the UP2030 Net Zero Neighbourhoods Project including stakeholder engagement, workshops, partnership working and highlight upcoming milestones.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to:

- Note that Belfast, represented by Belfast City Council, is a pilot city within the Horizon Europe UP2030 project which is focused on the development of a net zero neighbourhood framework using technical tools and support that are provided through the UP2030 consortium including analysis, mapping and engagement.
- To support a partnership with the RSUA to deliver the design competition in the UP2030 area in alignment with the project ambitions.
- To support Groundwork NI's Heritage Lottery bid, 'Climate Resilient Heritage' that is proposed to roll out within communities in the UP2030 pilot area.
- To note that an update report on UP2030 was also brought to the City Growth & Regeneration Committee yesterday, 12 June 2024.

3.0 Main report

3.1 In March 2022 Council was invited to participate in a three-year Horizon Europe consortium funding application from the Urban Planning 2030 (UP2030) fund to guide cities through the transitions required to meet their climate neutrality ambitions. As reported in November 2022 and March 2023, the City Regeneration and Development and Climate teams were successful in joint bid of €204,250/£176,024 to further an integrated approach between urban planning, achieving net zero and aspects of resilience.

3.2 Cities account for 70% of the global CO2 emissions and consume 78% of the world's energy. The UP2030 project is about recognising the role cities play in achieving net zero by 2050, and the sequence of actions and transitions that would be required by 2030 to ensure this target ambition is met. The 5UP approach guides the work of the project and the considerations required for the development of a framework for creating a net zero neighbourhood:

UP-Dating: Identifying the needs and barriers, and reviewing the processes, planning codes and policies that should be urgently updated to create future proofed NZ neighbourhoods.

UP-Skilling: Building capacities to upskill the entire stakeholder ecosystem, from city departments to urban practitioners to the construction industry, through to citizens.

UP-Grading: Considering the transformation at the suitable physical scale.

UP-Scaling: Scaling solutions and integrating them across sectors by shaping governance arrangements and matching financial resources.

UP-Taking: Sharing knowledge and learning through the project to create long-lasting communities of practice.

- 3.3 The project kicked off in February 2023 and will run until December 2025 and is driven by robust project milestones and constant engagement across the consortium that is made up of 46 partners, with Belfast one of 11 pilot cities and only UK city. As agreed at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in March 2023, the geographic area of the UP2030 pilot covers the Linen Quarter and the surrounding communities of Barrack Street, Sandy Row, Donegall Pass and the Market. The primary focus of UP2030 is on the development of a Net Zero (NZ) Neighbourhood Framework that is shaped around three thematic areas: active travel, greening and retrofit. These themes link across to the UP2030 pillars of a fair and just transition, carbon neutrality and resilience.
- 3.4 Council's UP2030 team is comprised of City Regeneration & Development and Climate team staff who collaborate on project development, engaging stakeholders and achieving the milestones set out within the wider UP2030 project. This includes regular consortium and work package meetings, project and financial reporting and ongoing contact with our liaison partner, Mapping for Change, as well as ongoing discussions with tool providers through the programme who can provide free technical support to enable the transition to NZ.
- 3.5 **Progress to date: Stakeholder engagement and workshop delivery**
- Since the beginning of the project, stakeholder engagement has included mapping across sectors and areas of work, attending relevant events or meetings and building partnerships and sharing information. This has included one-to-one meetings with community representatives and site walks to understand local priorities and the challenges facing the surrounding city centre communities. It quickly became clear that there is a need to have 'climate conversations' with stakeholders to help everyone begin to understand the wider issues in relation to the impact of climate change, what the transition to net zero means for them and their work and the ways people can begin to participate in the transition. Therefore, a component part of UP2030 is to also support awareness raising regarding net zero in general and we continue to work through these multi-stakeholder channels throughout the programme to secure input into the development of the NZ Neighbourhood Framework.

- 3.6** A key feature in our approach has been linking into existing thematic stakeholder groups that have broad membership and expertise. In particular, this includes the City Greening Group that is convened by Belfast Healthy Cities; the Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel (CAST) subgroup within the Belfast Agenda; and engagement with Retrofit Hub that is coordinated by the Climate Team. There has also been engagement across government, academic, community, thematic city partners and Council teams to elicit input and included a presentation to the Resilience and Sustainability Board. This approach has ensured that we have developed a sound understanding of the challenges, opportunities and barriers across the thematic areas of work and are linked into relevant projects among city partners. An example of this is through an existing partnership with the Graduate School of Queen's University School of Built Environment and NIHE, where partners came together to deliver a QUB social innovation challenge with residents of John Street and Hamill Street.
- 3.7** This initiative was run by QUB and focused on NIHE land within the UP2030 area in the Barrack Street vicinity and focused on improving the quality of life of residents through the development of climate friendly place shaping proposals. Students from a variety of disciplines came together to deliver the challenge through the challenge title: 'Making Belfast a Green and Playful City'. Further to this work, a number of proposed interventions were identified through the consultation and NIHE are leading on exploring how these can be implemented and have already taken an initial step to begin reshaping the space based on needs identified in the engagement and supporting NZ interventions. This a strong example of multi-partner approach to deliver NZ and this along with the ongoing learnings from QUB and the NIHE will shape the UP2030 framework.
- 3.8** Additionally, Officers work in partnership with the Master's of Architecture StreetSpace initiative in QUB that has focused on the Market, Donegall Pass, Sandy Row and the Village communities over the past two years. In mid-June StreetSpace will hold a workshop based on the research and engagement with communities in these areas over the past year. The workshop is called 'Women in the Neighbourhood' and will investigate how issues of mobility and housing affect the everyday lives of women and explore solutions to foster safe, more inclusive cities and the feedback from this will further enhance our understanding of the community issues and inform the UP2030 NZ Framework.
- 3.9** As a result of our engagement sessions, we received a request from Groundwork NI to support their bid 'Climate Resilient Heritage' to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which would focus on two

areas within the UP2030 area, i.e. Sandy Row and the Market. The project would aim to ensure that the natural and cultural heritage of Northern Ireland is conserved for future generations and involves developing a network of young climate champions, supporting them to gain an understanding of the drivers of climate change, how this is/will affect the heritage of Northern Ireland, and what practical steps can be undertaken to mitigate against these effects in their local community. The programme will include training and practical action, e.g. carbon literacy training, data collection and greening projects. Members are asked to support Groundwork's bid in principal and, if successful, Officer attendance at future steering group meetings, which will ensure alignment of the thematic ambitions of the UP2030 project and can build on the momentum of engagement and data developed in the area to date, supporting development and delivery of the net zero neighbourhood framework within the pilot area.

4.0 Delivering project milestones

Key milestones achieved to date include the delivery of five workshops held between April to October 2023 with cross sector stakeholders, including a specific neighbourhood engagement session for community representatives from the pilot area. These events provided an introduction and background to the UP2030 project, exploration of the importance of climate neutrality for cities, and outlined the intention to develop a net zero framework neighbourhood approach within the pilot area but that can be replicated across the city. The workshops were interactive and facilitated input from participants with thematic and community interests as well as engaged strategic partners who operate across the city and region. This initial phase of engagement gathered quality input from diverse stakeholders that helped shape the thematic outline of the framework and refined the areas of focus.

4.1 Data collection and analysis has provided another layer of understanding of the UP2030 area and helped identify further needs, challenges and opportunities for net zero led regeneration to future proof the area and communities. A geospatial analysis of the UP2030 pilot area was undertaken, using interactive mapping software to overlay current information on the district such as demographics, tree data, deprivation indices, economic activity, travel to work/school behaviours, housing tenure, as well as projected climate impacts such as flooding and heat risk.

4.2 Building on this the initial engagement activities and data collection, a key project milestone was the delivery of five Visioning workshops with cross sector stakeholders that took place in Spring/Summer 2024. The purpose of this most recent engagement programme was to establish a common vision for the

UP2030 area and test the emerging Framework ideas. The sessions also provided a chance to identify future opportunities for improving greening and active travel, as well as exploring the potential to progress a retrofit pilot that builds on the recent learnings of the Retrofit Hub.

- 4.3 The workshops included internal Council staff, the Belfast Agenda CAST group, the City Greening Group and a session for young people organised with Alternatives. The purpose of these was to gain agreement on the vision for the project across the three themes (greening, active travel and retrofit) and underpinned by the three project pillars (carbon neutrality, resilience and a fair and just transition) by asking participants to imagine what a net zero Belfast could look like in 2050 and considering the actions required to support or deliver that transition. Participants were presented with mapped geospatial analysis data and the insights gathered on the project to date.
- 4.4 The final Visioning workshop with the Retrofit Hub will address three areas: commercial, public buildings and residential (divided into area, tenure and typology). This approach aligns to the identified areas of work within the Retrofit Hub, emerging data from the Local Area Energy Plan and will explore issues in relation to funding opportunities and financial models, capacity issues (e.g. skills/training, supply chain), policy and legislation and potential pipeline opportunities.
- 4.5 Following analysis of the feedback and findings from the Visioning sessions, coupled with analysis of the previous learning and research produced by the Retrofit Hub, we re-engaged the workshop stakeholders in a final follow up session. Through this we were able to sense check the emerging framework ideas, build a shared understanding of NZ options and agreed the adaptive pathways for the short/long term sequence of actions that would be required to support the transition and explore opportunities for pilot projects to help test concepts for the NZ Framework alongside continued stakeholder engagement.
- 4.6 An opportunity has been flagged through the Retrofit Hub Steering group to align the ambitions of the retrofit strand of the UP2030 work with a proposal to run a Net-Zero Neighbourhood Ideas Competition as a partnership between the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA) and JP Corry with support from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and the Northern Ireland Construction Group (NICG). It will challenge design teams led by Early Career Architects to generate ideas for the best way to deliver a net-zero neighbourhood in Northern Ireland. The competition seeks to explore how a holistic neighbourhood approach to lowering carbon emissions compares to a more

focused property-by-property approach. This will be an opportunity to build on the visioning outcomes of the retrofit work and engage with communities in the pilot area to codesign approaches for net zero delivery and contribute to the development of the framework. Members are requested to support UP2030 partnering with the RSUA to deliver the design competition in the UP2030 area in alignment with the project ambitions.

4.7 Maximining cross council alignment to NZ goals

Ensuring alignment of this project with the ongoing work and priorities of Climate team is a critical aspect of UP2030 and will shape future milestones and opportunities. This is particularly relevant to the work underway in relation to the Solar PV Study and possible follow up studies that could provide analysis of rooftops that may have potential for solar PV, greening interventions/retrofit or both. A Retrofit Hub Report on the UP2030 area, and an active travel scoping study would also to help us understand the potential of meeting net zero ambitions through active travel and the cost benefit analysis of these measures by using tools such as University of Cambridge innovative Scope 4 analysis. Furthermore, opportunities exist across Council to align resources and ambitions towards NZ outcomes and ensure that all investment in the regeneration of the city considers carbon neutrality, resilience and a fair and just transition to net zero.

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

4.1 Members will be aware that given that the UK is no longer within the EU, the status of Council was changed from to being a Partner to that of an Associate which means that funding will be underwritten by the UK government (UK Research & Innovation, UKRI) fund rather than the EU. The Horizon Europe UP2030 Project is 100% funded for revenue only. No additional funding is required from Council however a small team drawn from the Climate Unit and City Regeneration and Development work together to oversee development and support implementation. Officers continue to work with partners to identify potential capital or revenue funding in the future and align current and emerging workstreams that could support the transition to net zero.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

5.1 Officers are currently developing the Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Screening and will incorporate within the emerging proposals.”

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During discussion, the Development Manager answered a range of questions in relation to community engagement, tools for analysis and cost of living concerns. In relation to Scope 4 methodology, she explained that it referred to the reduction in emissions achieved by the use of a company's products or services, to help create a modal shift.

One Member highlighted that the Disability Advisory Group report on the impact and practical solutions for Climate issues could be useful to this research also.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Belfast Festival of Learning Food Data Hackathon

The Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer reminded the Committee that the Belfast Learning Festival was part of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities and ran this year from 22nd to 27th of April. As part of the festival, the climate team had agreed to hold a hackathon that would explore the current food systems in the city. The aim was to help tackle real-world challenges using data driven solutions. She explained that the invite was issued to students in the Belfast Met, University of Ulster (UU) and Queens University Belfast (QUB) and more than 40 students had registered their interest. To help the students tackle 'the challenges of accessing healthy sustainable food in the city', the climate team had arranged a number of workshops throughout the week that included a modelling session with Allstate data analysts, a demonstration of the latest census data, the QUB Geoportal and lessons on how to use the NISRA data platform.

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Mr. N. Cairns Mr. L. Mowbray, the winning team from the Ulster University.

The team presented their aim to develop an app for a mobile farmer's market that would travel throughout different neighbourhoods in Belfast, aimed at those with limited access to fresh produce. These markets would offer locally sourced fruits, vegetables, and other sustainable food products at affordable prices. They explained that, by bringing the market directly to people, their objective was to eliminate the transportation barrier and make healthy food more accessible.

The team described the potential features of their app, together with the data which had been used to inform their app and the benefits of a sustainable food city. They also highlighted that they were currently studying digital technology and the app was something that they might be able to develop in the future, as part of their course.

During discussion the Committee congratulated the team on their work. Members highlighted the potential and benefits of the app and encouraged its future development.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report and the presentation on the findings of the challenge from the winning group.

The Climate Change Act (Reporting Bodies) Regulations

The Committee considered the undernoted report and associated appendices:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To highlight the new regulations that will place new climate change reporting duties on public bodies, including Belfast City Council.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1

- I. Note the attached correspondence from DAERA.**
- II. Note that the regulations come into place early May 2024 and an update will be brought back to update Committee in due course.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

Section 42 of the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 requires DAERA to make new Regulations, which will place climate change reporting duties on specified public bodies. The regulations will come into operation in early May 2024, 21 days after they are laid in the Assembly. However, the first reports by public bodies required under the regulations, will not be due to be submitted until October 2025.

3.2 What will be required?

There are two types of reports which we will be required to provide under the reporting duties set by the Regulations: 1) ‘climate change mitigation’ reports; and 2) ‘climate change adaptation’ reports.

3.3 Climate change mitigation reports must include:

- 1. a statement, in respect of each of the three preceding financial years, of the amounts and the sources of the council’s greenhouse gas emissions;**
- 2. a statement of the council’s proposals and policies for reducing those amounts and otherwise for mitigating the effects of climate change in the exercise of its functions;**
- 3. a statement of the time-scales for implementing those proposals and policies; and**
- 4. an assessment of the progress made towards implementing the proposals and policies set out in any previous climate change mitigation report.**

3.4 Climate change adaptation reports must include:

5. an assessment of the current and predicted impact of climate change in relation to its functions;
6. a statement of council's proposals and policies for adapting to climate change in the exercise of its functions;
7. a statement of the timescales for implementing those proposals and policies; and
8. an assessment of the progress made towards implementing the proposals and policies set out in any previous climate change adaptation report.

3.5 The Regulations state that we must also have regard to the most recent 5 yearly UK Climate Change Risk Assessment and that we must publish the report on the council website and DAERA will also publish it on theirs.

There is an opportunity for cooperation between two or more reporting bodies to submit a joint report.

3.6 What support will be provided by DAERA

DAERA will provide:

1. technical, co-designed guidance on how to complete climate change reports;
2. a reporting template containing a list of climate change questions;
3. an online climate change reporting portal to enter data; and
4. training to complete the reports.

3.7 Timescales for reporting

The frequencies and timings are set to align with the development of the 5-yearly UK Climate Change Risk Assessments which are required under the UK Climate Change Act 2008 – these risk Assessments include detail on the current and projected climate change risks and impacts to Northern Ireland.

3.8 The regulations require the Council to submit the first of its 3- yearly reports on mitigation by 31 October 2025. The second and third 'mitigation report' must be submitted to DAERA by 31st October 2028 and 31st October 2031 respectively, and so on for subsequent reports every 3 years.

3.9 The first 'adaptation report' must be submitted to DAERA by 31st March 2026 (the first report will cover a 4 year period beginning from 1st January 2026). The second and third report will

be submitted by 31st January 2030 and 31st January 2035 respectively, and every 5 years from then on.

3.10 How have we prepared for this reporting?
Mitigation

A greenhouse gas emissions baseline report was completed for the Councils operations for the period 2019/20. This report included:

- Scope 1 emissions (direct emissions from combustion in Council owned or controlled boilers, furnaces and vehicles); and
- Scope 2 emissions (emissions are associated with purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling).

3.11 The report included only a small portion of Scope 3 emissions (these occur upstream and downstream of the Council's operations from sources not controlled by the Council) as it did not include the emissions from the Council's supply chain. The report estimated the Council's emissions to be 18,783 tonnes CO₂e with the majority of these from gas (46%), electricity (23%) and fleet (15%). The most significant cost centres in terms of emissions are Capital, Residual waste and GLL.

3.12 The Council's supply chain emissions have since been calculated separately (for 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23) and the team worked closely with Procurement to develop a capacity to track these emissions annually going forward. Scope 3 supply chain currently makes up the bulk of the council's emissions at 84% (71,714 tonnes CO₂e in 2022/23) with 18% of supply chain emissions coming from River Ridge Recycling (Portadown) Ltd and Arc 21 Joint Committee.

3.13 Going forward, an annual emission report will be provided to Committee by June each year thereafter. There are some gaps in the data around internal waste that need to be captured to get the clearest picture of Council emissions, however the climate team are working on a proposal through the climate fund that will help make the estimates more accurate.

The Council is therefore well positioned to provide the required statement of the amounts and the sources of the council's greenhouse gas emissions (1 above) by 31 October 2025.

3.14 A Climate Data Platform is currently being developed by Digital Services to store this information and track progress on delivery. This will enable a snapshot progress report at any time and the

climate team will be able to provide an assessment of the progress made towards implementing the proposals and policies (4 above).

3.15 Adaptation

A Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) undertaken by KPMG in 2023 includes an assessment of the current and predicted impact of climate change on Council functions (5 above). In terms of providing a statement of council's proposals and policies for adapting to climate change and the timescales for implementation (6-7 above), these are all captured in the Council's Climate Action Plan and have been included in the draft Corporate Plan. Again, it will be important going forward that the relevant Departments include these climate actions in their annual business plans and budgets to demonstrate progress on adapting to current and future climate risks in adaptation reporting (8 above).

3.16 The Council is therefore well positioned to deliver its first 'adaptation report' to DAERA by 31st March 2026 (covering the 4 year period beginning from 1st January 2026). As above, the Climate Data Platform will enable regular tracking and reporting of progress.

3.17 Next steps

1. The Climate Team will be briefing DMTs as required to ensure staff are aware of reporting requirements.
2. Updates will be brought back to Committee in due course.

3.18 Financial and Resource Implications

There is no known extra funding available, however DAERA have stated that they will be providing all the necessary practical support with public bodies, training and an online portal for public bodies to use. There may be additional costs associated with data exploration and development options identified through the working group. CMT will be kept informed of the progress.

Resourcing needs are not fully understood at this point, however we will review the progress and report back to Committee in due course.

3.19 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None Identified."

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

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Additional Item - Retrofit Workshop

The Committee agreed that a Committee Retrofit Workshop would be planned for September and representatives from NIHE, Phoenix Energy and Belfast Retrofit Hub be invited to attend. The Committee noted that the draft agenda for the Workshop would be considered by the Committee at its meeting in August.

Chairperson