

REPORT TITLE:	Discharge of roles and responsibilities since the last meeting of the Council
REPORT AUTHOR:	Councillor Scott Patient
AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY:	Climate Change and Resilience (including Housing and VCS)
DATE:	23 rd March 2022

HOUSING

Housing Strategy and Growth Team

- The development at Abbey Park, Illingworth of 83 homes, which is due to complete at the end of March 2022, has been brought forward through the Calderdale and Together Housing Investment Partnership (CTHIP). This is a Together Housing owned site where they have included 63 homes for affordable rent and 20 homes for shared ownership, this development has provided homes for three families who were living in the Council's temporary accommodation and who were homeless. Together Housing are organising a small opening ceremony which will allow CTHIP board members and Ward Councillors to attend the development and visit one of the homes before it is handed over. A date will be confirmed shortly.
- The Yorkshire Housing scheme of 267 homes is due to complete in 2025. There is a mix of tenure on site: 34 homes for affordable rent, 111 homes for shared ownership, 46 homes for rent to buy and 76 homes for open market sale. The first 9 homes will be complete in April 2022, they have had a slight delay with connecting facilities to the properties e.g., Water. The first phase which is primarily infrastructure and roads is due to complete in September 2022 which an overlap of phase two starting. Space Homes had not yet marketed any of the homes in January but already had an interest of around 58 families. Members from the Housing Strategy & Growth Team along with two of the Elland Ward Councillors met with Yorkshire Housing and Equans in January and will continue to meet with them quarterly on site to see the progress of the scheme and help respond to any community concerns that are raised.

Homelessness Service

- **Migration Support Team:** This team are currently preparing for a number of families arriving via the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, which supports those fleeing war-torn countries such as Syria. Our role includes finding a permanent home for the

families and ensuring they are furnished with everything they may need upon arriving in the country. We work alongside a wide range of agencies to provide a range of support, including language skills and integration into Calderdale. We are working with Migration Yorkshire to understand what support might be required in terms of any potential impact of the war in Ukraine.

- **The Winter Shelter:** the winter shelter closes at the end of this month. We are working closely with Christian's Together Calderdale, who operate the shelter and other supported housing and homelessness agencies to support those at the shelter to move on into a more secure home. This may be their own tenancy or supported accommodation. There will continue to be support for anyone who is sleeping rough, or at risk of sleeping rough, via Street Reach – an outreach service run by Horton Housing, as well as the Council's own Rough Sleeper Navigator, supporting those who need accommodation. Work will now begin on preparing for October when the shelter will re-open. Capturing the thoughts from current residents will inform the plans for the future.
- **Rough Sleeping:** The Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) bid was submitted recently, focusing on continuing with our current pathway, which has successfully reduced the numbers of people sleeping rough. New developments we have requested this year include: funding for a specific accommodation option for women; and a pathway for Non-UK nationals. We should hear the outcome of the bid over the next few months.

Private Sector Housing Team:

Beech Hill Phase 2

Works to repair and improve the external envelope of the 70 existing mixed tenure homes are now well underway. 57 of the 70 owners have signed up to the scheme with a further 6 expected to follow very soon. Discussions continue with the remaining 7 owners to secure their commitment and participation in the scheme. Ground and drainage work is progressing well with the new roofing work and insulation panels now planned to start in the middle of March during drier and more settled weather. In the meantime, nearly all asbestos surveys are complete and new doors and windows have now commenced installation.

The programme is currently 3 weeks behind schedule mainly due to the February storms but should be completed by the end of November 2022. A site visit with WYCA colleagues, Homes England, colleagues from Together Housing Group and the scheme architects (AHR) and contractor (Engie) will take place on Monday 14 March after the visit to the Phase 1 site.

Affordable Warmth & the Climate Emergency

Demand for support for low-income households continues to increase as residents seek advice on how they can tackle rising energy costs. Recent press reports predict a further increase in the energy price cap due to the Ukraine crisis and its effect on the global oil and gas markets. Average household energy bills may increase to £3,000 per home from October 2022 which is likely to see thousands of more local households in fuel poverty,

significantly over the 15,700 last official government figures for 2019 (2-year data lag) which will not account for the latest price rises.

We continue to assist with room in the roof, loft and cavity wall insulation through Phase 3 of the government's Green Homes Grant Local Authority scheme with almost £5m of funding in place up until the end of March 2023 for low-income households. Other grant and equity loan funding is available to assist with heating repairs, boiler replacements and new central heating systems for qualifying households. Details are available on the Council's website <https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/housing/energy-efficiency>

Discussions are also underway to consider how we expand our services to use the data and research currently being carried out by the Energy Saving Trust. This will model future area-based insulation and renewable energy residential retrofit energy schemes and associated investment required to achieve our Net Zero ambitions for the housing sector. Resources will be required to build the business case and funding applications required to catalyse this work, along with providing impartial retrofit advice and support to more affluent households looking to make their homes more energy efficient.

Empty Homes & Housing Enforcement

National Empty Homes Week took place Monday 28 February – Sunday 6 March. We took the opportunity to highlight the support available and the work that takes place to help bring empty properties back into use.

The Council is working hard to reduce the number of empty homes. There's a range of support available for owners, including advice on how to get renovation projects moving again and information on topics such as selling and renting, work that can be carried out on empty properties, community-led solutions and short-term finance options.

Enforcement action to tackle long-term empty homes is always a last resort, but we do deal with empty homes which are causing serious issues in a proactive way. This work includes repair and improvement notices to force owners to take action and even enforced sales or compulsory purchase orders. We are currently awaiting the outcome of a recent Compulsory Purchase court hearing on an empty home for over 30 years, which if successful will send a strong message to empty property home-owners that the Council will take a strong enforcement approach if they are not prepared to work with us.

GREEN ECONOMY

Carbon Reduction

The submission for £1.7m funding from the third phase of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund has been approved, supported by £350k capital funding approved by Council. This will enable delivery of a low carbon replacement heating system at Todmorden Sports Centre, where the current system has reached the end of its life. This work will build on the six schemes that are nearing completion, funded by £2.85m of funding from the first phase of

the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund and £350k of Council capital funding, supporting the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2038.

Climate Change Action Plan

The plan is currently being developed and will be published over the next few months. The Climate Change Cabinet Working Party has undertaken two workshops to develop and agree priorities and actions, informed by the Emissions Reduction Pathway. A Calderdale plan will:

- Consider specific challenges we have in terms of our historic economy and existing assets.
- Respond to our unique flood risk and identify how widespread action can result in more effective natural flood management and biodiversity improvements.
- Give our local vibrant and creative communities a say in how the future should be shaped

Themes of the Action Plan : The workshops have identified six themes which could help to structure work and be used as themes for “task and finish” delivery groups: **Shared Voice** (proposed as a central group which would respond to feedback from all the specific themes. This group would pick up responsibility for linking local work to regional and national strategies, lobbying, and maintain an overview of how well work is progressing); **Green Economy; Community Climate Action; Warm & Dry Homes; Transport; and Land & Nature** . These themes and the next steps will be confirmed at the meeting of the Climate Change Working Party on 15 March 2022.

Next Steps:

- Develop a long list of actions categorised into themes
 - Review and develop these actions supported by data from the technical Emission Reduction Pathway and good practice identified from elsewhere
 - Bring together thematic task & finish groups based around themes to co-produce action and delivery plans (w/c 4 April onwards)
 - Wider consultation (from w/c 9 May)
 - Adoption (June/July)
 - Post-adoption engagement (summer/autumn 2022)
- **Green and Healthy Streets Policy:** Work has begun training relevant staff across the Council in the aims and policy objectives of the new Green and Healthy Streets Policy. This will ensure that the policy is embedded into work across the Council and that there is consistency in terms of approach. So far, the training has been very well-received.
 - **Community Engagement & Communications:** We are working with the Comms Team to plan for increased profile of the Climate Leaderships graphics. Planning will begin shortly for the next phase of the £1m CMBC and Community Foundation for Calderdale (CFFC) Climate Emergency grant, which is anticipated to open for applications this month (March). We aim to use the next round of CFFC funding to progress our Climate Action Plan through community engagement with local community organisations.

Calder Greening

Cromwell Bottom

- Installation of ephemeral pools on North Loop; Creation of new pond, excavated and lined with help of volunteer group.
- Swift and House Martin boxes erected on the North Loop storage shed. Both species have now unfortunately moved to the red list on the UK Birds of Conservation Concern, so support for these species is particularly timely.

Mid Calder & Tributaries:

- River clean-ups completed between Hebden and Sowerby Bridge.
- Huge update in social media engagement following posts on debris clearing and installation of coir rolls (3.4k reached, 1,231 interactions).
- Leaky dams and willow spiling at Ogden.
- Permit approval at Beechwood & coir rolls installed.

INNS:

- Ryburn: 6.1km of watercourse treated for Japanese knotweed over 3.2 days, 20 landowners engaged.
- Hebble Brook: 3.6 km surveyed, 2.6km of watercourse treated for Japanese knotweed over 0.5 days, 18 landowners engaged.
- Red Beck: 9.1km of Red Beck surveyed, 0.2 km of watercourse treated over 1.5 days, 1 landowner engaged.
- Main Calder: 0.2km treatment of Japanese knotweed carried out over 4 days, 0.4km of vegetative surveys carried out prior to restoration trials.

Copley Valley/Milner Royd

- Meadow mowing and wildlife seeding (yellow rattle) carried out with the aim of promoting sustainability & biodiversity.
- Milner Royd paths & surface for seating area completed, 90% completion of riverside link path completed, including new amphibian fencing.
- Good volunteer involvement, 10 task days held this quarter, totalling 89 volunteer hours on activities including hedgerow pruning, orchard mowing, weeding & mulching. Successful bat walk held on site, promoting engagement, education and supporting biodiversity. Completion of path installation on flood lagoon has promoted increased visitor numbers. Report and assessment successfully submitted to local wildlife site (LWS) panel, resulting in designation as an LWS site attracting greater protection/consideration in the event of future planning applications affecting the area.
- Delay to works at Copley Valley were caused by late confirmation of the need for an Ordinary Water Course permit to cover areas of the site including the sand martin bank, and the access track, affecting siting of the viewing tower. The OWC was applied for, revised designs/alternatives were considered by the land drainage team and have resulted in the viewing tower and sand martin boxes being refused, due to their proximity to the lagoon. In mitigation, bird and bat boxes will be attached to trees. Adjustments to the path and vehicle access area were also required.

Brearley Fields

- Confident that we will receive the consent of Calder High School (BF landowners) for work to begin at Brearley Fields before the end of March.
- We are prepared for project procurement to launch asap (via Yortender) and have been provided with a list of 7 specialist contractors to approach by our wetland engineer. The forecast start date for the wetland construction is mid-May 2022 and scheduled to last 8 weeks.

Here is the land management/tree/maintenance tasks update from Sam:

Trees

There are 11 tasks outstanding. These are tackled on a safety priority basis. For each task, I aim to obtain three quotes from external contractors (the Forestry Team are unable to carry out work on our behalf). Felling a mature tree (9 trees on my waiting list) costs the service approx. £1,000–£2,500+ depending on size, damage and location. In addition, we have multiple trees which require crown thinning (£300-£1,000) or pruning (£250-£500).

Maintenance requests for issues that do not pose a safety risk or is not necessary for the health of the tree (trees causing shading/blocking views) are a low priority. In most cases, I inform the property owners that our service will not be carrying out the work.

Miscellaneous

In addition, the following tasks have also been arranged in the past year:

- Pothole repairs (Bean Street, Elland)
- Fencing repairs (Healey Wood Road, Brighouse)
- Footpath stile repairs (Dineley Avenue, Todmorden)
- Drainage repairs (outstanding) (Golden Lion pub, Ripponden)

Site Improvements

- Dineley Avenue, Todmorden.

I'm working with Cllr Cavanagh and the Local Neighbourhood Coordinator to create a Site Management Plan for a large and very neglected woodland/public greenspace owned by the service. A local Community Group will take on some of the work, but if the budget allows, there are multiple jobs (fencing repairs, signage).

Public Services

- The S.A.F.E. (Sustainable, Active, Fun and Environmental) Travel Cup is a competition in which primary schools across Calderdale take part in promoting sustainable travel in their respective communities. Campaigns from previous years' entrants have seen podcasts, songs, banners and other innovative ideas to address air pollution, reduce traffic congestion, encourage active travel and promote wider healthy living initiatives. The SAFE Travel Cup 2022 is now being planned after a two year hiatus, and schools across Calderdale are being invited to take part after Easter and organise their campaign

throughout the summer term. The final of the competition brings participating schools together to present their campaigns in a “Dragon’s Den” type event, and the winning school will be presented with the SAFE Travel Cup.

- In the fleet of Council vehicles, 16% are now electric and ultra-low emission vehicle (ULEV) compliant. The remaining 84% are diesel euro 6 compliant and it is the intention to replace these diesel vehicles with full electric by 2030. In order to achieve a 100% electric fleet, we need to consider the charging infrastructure required to keep the vehicles operational and Transport Services are looking into various options. The procurement of the right type (for the Council’s fleet) of electric vehicle chargers is not straight forward and the Transport Services Team are linking up with the Energy Saving Trust to explore the options for a charging infrastructure that can serve 200 vehicles in a way that doesn’t compromise the operational delivery of services.

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

Launch of Cultural Fund

The team has been working hard to launch the new Cultural Fund – this will mean that more people will be able to benefit from the joy of Calderdale’s distinctive culture.

In 2024, Calderdale will celebrate its 50th birthday. As part of these celebrations, there will be a “Year of Culture in 2024”, where organisations and individuals will come together for a major events programme that recognises the importance of culture to the local economy and communities.

In the run up to the Year of Culture, the Council has invited the local voluntary sector to apply for a share of Calderdale Cultural Fund 2022–2025. Voluntary organisations can apply for between £5,000 and £25,000 a year, for up to three years, to deliver their cultural projects.

The deadline for grant applications is Wednesday 23rd March 2022. We have already had interest from 10 organisations, and we will be aiming have delivery in place from July 2022

Volunteers Week

Due to take place the first week of June, and to coincide with the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Planning is now underway, and we are working with services across the Council who manage volunteers, the VSI Alliance and the Community Foundation for Calderdale to join up these celebrations Early plans include:

- Lighting up key buildings purple.
- Volunteer badges – recruiting a volunteer designer at the moment.
- A Celebration event.
- Open House – various organisations will be opening their doors so potential volunteers can come and find out more.

- Vacant Spaces – we hope to occupy a vacant town centre space in each of the towns throughout June so people can drop in and find out about anything volunteering.
- Trustee Speed Dating – inviting local businesses and VCS recruiting volunteer trustees
- Corporate Volunteer Opportunities – staff opportunities.

Tackling Poverty

The team supports the Anti-Poverty Steering Partnership which has agreed a timetable to refresh the **Anti-Poverty Action Plan**. Lead Officers will be working on their contributions during April and May and a revised plan will be available in June 2022.

On 28th February the Anti-Poverty Partnership hosted a virtual event called '**Working Together to strengthen Money and Debt Support in Calderdale**'. Over 60 people attended and took part in small group discussions. The event report will be available from the beginning of April. A new Money & Debt Forum will be established and will work closely with other key groups including the Food Poverty Forum. For further information contact rachel.stewart@calderdale.gov.uk.

A group of key services tackling **fuel poverty** has been meeting since December 2021 to co-ordinate Calderdale's response to rising fuel prices and the energy crisis. The group has been working on the following:

- Launching [Power Calderdale](#) (fuel voucher scheme) funded by the Household Support Fund (£45,000) and delivered by Newground Together.
- Developing Calderdale's affordable warmth proposal to West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership (£93,000) to reduce the risk of emergency hospital admissions for low-income households most impacted by cold homes.
- Monitoring the demand for the [Energy Redress](#) schemes delivered by Newground Together and Citizens Advice Calderdale.
- Designing of a resource for professionals to help with identification of fuel poverty and signposting to relevant services for support, advice and information.



Fuel Poverty
Professionals Guide

- Developing of a new fuel poverty indicator due to the 2-year time lag for the [current data](#)
- Producing a Briefing Paper and completing a SWOT Analysis to better understand the problem and inform our response.

The group will continue to meet and monitor new and existing schemes, develop a communications plan, build on the current resources relating to fuel poverty and raise awareness of existing resources to ensure that all front-line professionals are adequately trained to identify individuals most at risk, and know what actions to take to support them. For further information please contact rachel.stewart@calderdale.gov.uk.