

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>Discharge of roles and responsibilities since the last meeting of the Council</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>Councillor Scott Patient</b>
<b>AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY:</b>	<b>Climate Change and Resilience (including Housing and VCS)</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> July 2022</b>

This Council report is especially prescient given the recent blistering heatwave which caused deaths and countless stresses to services. Events like these are becoming more common and severe given continued investment into fossil fuels by Governments like ours. It's distressing that Conservative leadership both local and National continue to play politics with the Climate Crisis rather than understanding the need to act fast and offer solutions which would help people both health wise and financially during the cost of living crisis. The Good Law project this week won a landmark High Court Court case, which has ruled that the Governments Net Zero Strategy is unlawful and "Vague" with no assurances that the aim to decarbonise the UK by 2050 can be met. In the meantime this then falls to Councils like ours and the Combined Authority to take more direct Action to hit our more ambitious target of 2038.

In some local news i was pleased to speak at the recent Halifax Civic Trust AGM about what we are doing as a borough to decarbonise our buildings and have had a few discussions since about how we can help the trust get more involved in this work.

I recently opened the "Slow the Flow" Climate roadshow at the Halifax Central Library where we spoke about the their longstanding work on Natural Flood Management and volunteer lead community resilience. Events are still ongoing over the summer, see their website & socials for further details.

It was a pleasure to so the keynote address and hand certificates out to the graduates for the second cohort of "Green Futures" students at the Todmorden Climate College. Good news that their course will be continuing into next year. Well done all.

The UKs first ever E-bike festival took place a few weeks ago in Mytholmroyd at the bottom of Englands Longest Gradual Incline - Cragg Vale, which saw many visitors try out E bikes and E Cargo bikes. Heard lots of interest in ditching the car for one of these.

Special thanks to the organisers and partners, Hebden Royd Town Council Cargodale, Blazing Saddles and others, looking forward to an even bigger and better event next year.

## HOUSING

### HOUSING STRATEGY & GROWTH TEAM

#### **Housing Delivery Test Update March 2022**

The 2021 Housing Delivery Test showed Calderdale as having made a small improvement in housing delivery but is still subject to penalties for under-delivering new homes in the Borough. In response, the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan produced in 2020 has been updated. This includes the results of surveys which have confirmed developer interest in investing in the Borough, progress in adopting the Local Plan and reforming development management. Positively, the latest 2021/22 affordable housing completions has been published by Homes England and it shows we delivered 103 affordable homes, up from 29 in 20/21 which is a 112% increase.

#### **WYCA**

Opportunities continue to be progressed in securing expertise and funding from the Housing Revenue Fund. The latest successes include securing expertise in exploring low carbon residential options on a Council owned draft Local Plan site and also a study to identify how much it would cost to bring the Streets in the Sky at the Borough Market back into residential use. If viable options can be found it would contribute positively to the housing need in the Borough.

#### **Housing Development**

The **Valley Heights Scheme** (formally known as Abbey Park) by Together Housing has fully completed now, seeing 83 new homes built to good efficiency standards and on the site of former housing that had reached the end of its life cycle. The scheme includes bungalows and shared ownership properties and all have been let or sold. Officers from Together Housing and the Council recently welcomed MP Holly Lynch and Councillor Stephanie Clarke for a tour of the site which included a visit to an occupied home where a family had moved from nearby to a new property that better met the medical needs of one of the family.

**Beech Hill:** Phase 1 (new build) has had some setbacks and the first phase handover of some of the new properties will be delayed but this is being managed well on-site by Together Housing and Esh Construction. Work is underway with the Council's Accessible Homes team to agree and finalise the adaptations to five properties on the new build estate. MP Lisa Nandy and MP Holly Lynch visited Beech Hill in May and were able to see first-hand what the strategic partnerships between the Council, Together Housing, WYCA and Homes England are able to achieve. The project has been submitted to the Insider Yorkshire Property Awards and a nomination for Residential Development of the Year would be a great recognition for the Calderdale and Together Housing Investment Partnership (CTHIP).

**North Halifax Transformation Programme:** The competitive tender process for this programme is reaching the final stages and, subject to approval of September Cabinet, it is anticipated the preferred bidder will be announced early October 2022. The NHTP will enable over 280 sustainable and mixed tenure new homes alongside an age inclusive extra care facility to be built at three sites in the Illingworth and Mixenden and Ovenden wards. The development investment from this is expected to be in excess of £30m.

## **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING TEAM**

### **Empty Homes**

The six-week appeal window regarding the long term problematic empty property expired on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022. While the owner had started to tackle its severe disrepair and re-roofed it, it remains unsecure and open to the weather. Anti-social behaviour has also been reported. Work is ongoing with Legal Services about using the Compulsory Purchase Order to take ownership of the property and immediately re-sell it via auction.

The 3Es (engage, educate and enforce) strategic group is also reviewing the approach to other long term empty buildings and homes around the borough which attract complaints and counter the Council's efforts to regenerate our towns and more deprived areas.

### **Housing Energy – Affordable warmth & Climate Emergency**

It is estimated that one in four households are now in fuel poverty, and with a further increase of £800 on energy bills expected in October, this figure may increase to one in three, approximately 32,000 homes in Calderdale.

The Council continues to work with local partners to provide affordable warmth advice and develop referral pathways to support residents at greatest risk of living in a cold home. Some additional funding has been identified to bring in further short-term capacity for the winter, but this will only have a limited impact considering the scale of the problem and resources required to tackle it.

Work continues to provide room in the roof, loft and cavity wall insulation for low-income households as funded by the government's Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (GHG LAD) scheme which is in place to March 2023 and expected to improve over 500 homes.

The Beech Hill Phase 2 Group repair scheme is progressing well and will be completed by November 2022. The scheme is providing comprehensive improvements including pitched insulated roofs, drainage, new doors, windows and boundary wall treatment. 20 qualifying households are also being provided solar photovoltaic panels through additional funding secured through GHG LAD.

The Council is also working on the future of the Better Homes Hub and Better Homes Yorkshire energy scheme procurement which will support local authorities, social landlords

and private homeowners to tackle climate change and fuel poverty through energy efficiency retrofit schemes.

## Flood Grants

No of Applications	360
No of Eligible Applications	247
No of Applications Approved	148 (of the 247) to the value of £696k
No of Applications Completed	124 (of the 148) to the value of £584k

Support is being provided to ensure genuine applicants are completing flood resilience work to their homes and submitting invoices for payment. The final grant claim to the government Dept for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is due in August.

## HOMELESSNESS SERVICE

### Homes For Ukraine

The Migration Team are carrying out checks on potential hosts and coordinating the support for Ukrainians arriving and settling in Calderdale. The work remains challenging, but processes have been established and recruitment is underway to establish a dedicated team. The next steps for the team are to establish a re-matching service to support people on the Homes for Ukraine scheme where the hosts have failed checks or where the match has broken down to be rematched to a new host.

### Homelessness Prevention Grant

Due to high numbers of people presenting needing support and advice around their housing difficulties, the service has used the grant to strengthen the frontline, with an additional Prevention Officers and an Outreach worker. The aim is to prevent homelessness by affording people time where appropriate to seek alternative accommodation and reduce the need for temporary accommodation. Numbers in temporary accommodation are also high, additional posts within the team aim to focus on those in bed and breakfast and supporting those with more complex needs.

## GREEN ECONOMY

### Climate Communication & Climate Action Plan

2<sup>nd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> June marked Net Zero week. This is a new initiative promoting climate action and dialogue. The Council supported this by releasing a number of educational infographics (based on the Emission Reduction Pathway) and quizzes to help us to understand climate attitudes and concerns. The Council also provided two new videos about net zero and encouraging people to sign up to a mailing list for more climate information – plans are underway for launching a regular newsletter.

The co-production of the Climate Action Plan has been an intense focus for work since the last report – a draft Climate Action Plan has now been prepared. It is currently anticipated that this will be shared in draft format and that we will spend August and September consulting with key stakeholders and communities about the plan.

## Joint CFFC £1m Climate Emergency Fund

The second round of this fund closed recently and saw more than £500,000 of grant applications for c. £200,000 of funding. Projects spanned a wide range of areas – from feasibility studies to low energy lighting, zero carbon heating, and community education & outreach. The CFFC Grant panel are assessing applications at present and awards will be made to successful applicants imminently.

**Capital Work & Projects:** The climate team are continuing to support CAFM on phases 1 and 3 of the Public Sector Decarbonisation team, and Transportation to investigate EV options and explore how WYCA could support work in the region. We are working with the North East Energy Hub to launch a West Yorkshire pilot project to undertake Local Energy Action Plan (LEAP) for Calderdale. This important project will bring together disparate data sets to help us understand how we transition to zero carbon energy locally and identify priority areas for projects and interventions.

**Environmental Policy:** Work to maintain the Council's long standing environmental management system is ongoing, with internal audits and conversations taking place to ensure our sites and services remain focussed on environmental duties and best practice. The Council's Environmental Policy is being updated to align with our Net Zero commitment – this will come to Cabinet later in the year for approval.

## Calder Greening

Legal matters regarding the ownership of, and consents required, at Brearley Fields, that had persisted for several years and substantially delayed the project, have now been resolved. Procurement for the wetland works is now due to go live imminently on YORTENDER, with a view to work commencing in early August, and lasting for 8 weeks. Further habitat improvement works (tree planting, floodplain meadow creation) will be completed over the winter in cooperation with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, community groups, schools & volunteers.

## VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR



## Healthwatch

One of the Council's key voluntary sector relationships is through our contract for Healthwatch, which provides an independent voice for local people on health and social care services. Healthwatch is a statutory independent service commissioned by the Council, overseen by Healthwatch England. [Healthwatch Calderdale](#) was contracted for a further two years from April 2022 and is now led by a new Director, Karen Huntley. Healthwatch has increasingly been engaging with members of the public activities face-to-face now that Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted. In June staff and volunteers attended the Lead the Way Picnic in the Park at Manor Health Park, meeting with local people to find out their experiences of local health and social services. They collected over 30 service reviews at this event and shared information with other organisations attending, including the learning disabilities nursing team and nurses from Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust (CHFT).

Other recent news from Healthwatch includes the publication of the Overgate Hospice project [report](#). This piece of work was completed in partnership with the Hospice and gathered feedback about its services, both current and proposed. Healthwatch Calderdale have been working closely with the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership (WYHCP) in recent months, specifically on a project regarding emergency department attendance amongst 20-29 years olds, ensuring the public voice is at the heart of WYHCP work. The organisation has also been involved in work concerning carers, long Covid, learning disabilities, and outpatient clinic transformation at CHFT as well as access to primary care and dentistry. Healthwatch Calderdale recently published their annual report for 2021/22 which you can read [here](#).

## Volunteers Week

June saw the Council and partners across the voluntary and community sector celebrating Volunteers Week. The team worked with services across the Council who manage volunteers, the VSI Alliance and the Community Foundation For Calderdale (CFFC) to join up these celebrations. These included –

- The launch of a new [@VolunteerCdale](#) twitter feed - and lighting up key buildings like Wainhouse tower purple got us good visibility and impact with 54 likes and 16 retweets
- **Our volunteer badge for 2022 was locally designed and made and** 1800 were handed out to volunteers across Calderdale getting some really positive feedback from the
- We hosted a Calderdale **Volunteers Celebration event** at Shibden, Mereside which included 'Thank you' from myself as Cabinet member and Director for Regeneration and Strategy Shelagh O'Neill. The event was attended by 42 people from 9 different services and included volunteers from the VSI hub who are continuing to support covid vaccine roll out and other events like the Ann Lister celebrations. We've had some excellent feedback about the event and also ideas from the volunteers about what more the Council and the VSI alliance can do to promote and celebrate volunteers in the future... 'the event was just right, nice meeting up with people in person again but not too corporate' (volunteer quote)

- In partnership with the VSI Alliance and CFFC we organised a **Trustee speed dating event at Square Chapel which was** attended by 12 VCSE groups and 11 potential new trustees. Since the events we have matched to trustees to 3 organisations so far and working on more. We are now looking at how we develop this as an ongoing programme linking with CFFC business network events
- **We have also been collecting and publishing case studies** introducing our volunteers – including independent visitors, parks, countryside, museums, litter pickers, parks. This will develop over the year.

**Tackling Poverty:** The team supports the Anti-Poverty Steering Group and thematic groups including the Food Poverty Forum, Affordable Warmth Forum and Money & Debt Forum. The revised [Money and Wellbeing in Calderdale](#) web pages are frequently updated with the latest support and information available across a range of services.

The refresh of the **Anti-Poverty Action Plan** is underway and will be informed by the ongoing cost of living crisis. The revised plan will be agreed by the Anti Poverty Steering Group in August.

A large partnership event will take place on **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September** and will focus on heating and eating. This will be the first face to face event hosted by the Anti-Poverty Partnership since the Covid outbreak in March 2020. Details to follow.

The **fuel poverty group** has continued to meet and will formalise their purpose and aims at their July meeting. The group will be called the Affordable Warmth Forum going forward. The group is currently planning a #fuelyourknowledge campaign with some key messages around energy saving.

The new **Money & Debt Forum** met in May. The members of the group exchanged service updates and agreed to develop resources to support consistent informal budgeting advice for front line staff and to sign up to producing a '[cash first](#)' leaflet for Calderdale. Information is being collated and it is hoped that the leaflet will be ready by the end of the summer.

**Cost of Living** – A frontline worker factsheet and affordable warmth guide is due to be widely distributed across Calderdale during July. The aim of the new resources is to increase knowledge of support available and to start conversations about money with clients, colleagues, friends and family.