

County Councillor Nash

Phone:

Email:

Your ref:

Date: 10 October 2019

Dear County Councillor Nash

I refer to the recommendations of the County Council's External Scrutiny Committee of 16 July 2019.

Following advice of the Committee's support officer, I am writing to set out my response to recommendations 1, 2 and 5.

1. The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Environment and Planning give consideration to holding a Green Summit in Spring 2020

As the Committee is aware, the issue of climate change is receiving increased attention nationally and internationally. The recent UN Climate Summit in New York has been complemented by local declarations of a 'Climate Emergency' by many local authorities in the UK, including nine councils in Lancashire. Many Councils have declared they will be 'net zero carbon' by 2030, some 20 years ahead of the national target of 2050. Other Councils in England have adopted the 2050 target for net zero carbon.

Alongside the climate change activity, Lancashire Leaders have recently agreed to the preparation of a Greater Lancashire Plan (GLP). Workstreams are under development, and once agreed are likely to seek to identify existing data, undertake additional research and analysis and recommend future evidence-based interventions. Collectively, the workstreams will form a robust evidence base that will directly feed into the creation of the GLP. This will assist in underpinning and shaping the strategy for Lancashire moving forwards.

There is an opportunity that a workstream might be commissioned by the Lancashire Leaders before the end of 2019 to consider data and assess the potential for the reduction of carbon emissions that will lead to a net zero position by 2030 and 2050. Such an assessment report, if agreed, could provide for the first time a clear picture of the reductions that will be necessary and the scale of the changes needed above current forecasts. The assessment, if it proceeds, might be completed by Spring 2020.

In turn, the findings from the assessment could inform a Summit hosted by the Lancashire Leaders, involving the key public, private and voluntary sector

organisations that have a role in delivering the actions needed to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030 or 2050, as identified by the assessment report.

This could also mark the start of a wider conversation in Lancashire with residents and businesses about the journey towards net zero carbon in 2030 or 2050 and the changes that will be necessary in the economy and in communities. A 'Greater Lancashire Climate Conversation' about the reductions, and all that it entails for people living and working in the county, will inform the development of actions to reduce carbon emissions.

If it goes ahead, it is proposed that work on the assessment report and the climate conversation, and the subsequent measures that emerge, could be overseen by the Lancashire Leaders; with progress reports presented to the cabinet of each council in Lancashire, including the county council's cabinet.

Such an ambitious range of activity will need to be sufficiently resourced to manage the programme. The first stage of the programme, commissioning and managing the report into the assessment of potential carbon savings, can be contained within the Greater Lancashire Plan workstream. But after the assessment report has been prepared, the programme of subsequent activity will require resources to be identified as it is unlikely that sufficient capacity will be in place.

While the workstreams of the Greater Lancashire Plan are under development and have not yet been confirmed, a potential opportunity exists to advance the climate change agenda in Lancashire through the work of the Greater Lancashire Plan. I will therefore keep the Chair of the Committee updated as the work on the Plan develops and the decisions of the Lancashire Leaders emerge, including the potential of the work to help deliver the Committee's climate change ambitions.

2. The Cabinet give consideration to the establishment of a Cabinet Committee on Carbon Reduction

Implementation of the ambitious programme of climate change activity in response to recommendation number one of the Committee will cross organisational boundaries, spanning the public, private and voluntary sectors.

In turn, the programme should be overseen by the leaders of councils in Lancashire to provide the necessary municipal leadership, and to ensure consistency with the Climate Emergency declarations of councils in the county; rather than being overseen by a committee of the County Council or any other Council.

Reports to the Lancashire Leaders, complemented with annual reports to the Cabinet of each Council (including the County Council's Cabinet) would provide stronger governance than a report to a cabinet committee of the County Council. Such reports would be underpinned by the annual publication of local authority carbon emission data released by central government. This would support monitoring of the effectiveness of the programme of climate activity. I will, therefore, seek to advance this proposition with the Lancashire Leaders.

Internal carbon management work by the county council can be reported to the County Council's Cabinet on an annual basis. More frequent monitoring would not be effective because of the lead times for capital programmes to take effect.

5. **Working through the Lancashire Leaders, all District Councils and the unitary authorities across Lancashire be encouraged to make carbon reduction a consistent factor in all planning applications and local plans; and adopt a checklist of low carbon technologies to include but not limited to solar, electric vehicle charging points (including wireless) and heat source pumps.**

District Councils and the unitary authorities across Lancashire are already required to make carbon reduction a consistent factor in all planning applications and local plans. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) contains seven paragraphs (148 to 154) setting out the obligation to plan for new development that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and adapts to climate change.

As well as promoting low carbon technologies, the NPPF goes beyond the Committee's recommendation by also promoting development that reduces the need to travel or promotes sustainable travel, as well as promoting site layout and orientation to help reduce emissions.

The degree to which the climate change requirements of the NPPF have been embraced by District Councils and unitary authorities in Lancashire, and how far paragraphs 148 to 154 are embedded in the policies of Local Plans, can be assessed as part of the work in response to recommendation number one.

I hope this response is helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. A. Green' with a small flourish at the end.

County Councillor Michael Green
Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Environment and Planning