

**Topics: Clarity in Reporting, Community Adaptation Plans, Scope 3 Emissions, Potholes, Retrofit Company**

**Present:**

**Cornwall Council (CC):**

**Cllr Martyn Alvey: Portfolio holder for Environment and Climate Change**

**Mark Holmes: Manager: Carbon Neutral Cornwall Team; Environmental Adaptation Service; Nature Recovery Team**

**Nick Haywood: Program manager for the carbon neutral team (reports to MH)**

**Cornwall Climate Action Coalition (CCAC):**

**John Carley**

**Andrew Stott**

**Tom Pine**

**Apologies: Cllr Linda Taylor, Lead CC; Rhys Hobb, Environmental Resilience and Adaptation; Karen Jeffereys**

**i. Introduction by CCAC**

- CCAC mentioned Cllr Linda Taylor and her presence on Radio 4 today programme talking potholes and multiyear revenue support settlements.

**1. Clarity in Reporting**

The style of annual reporting by the Council, against the net zero by 2030 pledge, flags up factual progress against marker aspects, but does not provide any context or traffic light indication that would nourish the reader and enable them to gauge real progress, or to weigh the shortfalls in a meaningful way.

Aside from what is deposited on the Hive site in June of each year, a report is presented to the Neighbourhood Scrutiny Committee each May. Going forward the Commission is provisioned in its Terms of Reference to release reports for public consumption. Eg Forest for Cornwall targets given in hectares whilst progress so far given in number of trees.

**Question 1a: The Cornwall Carbon Neutral Action Plan was approved at Cabinet on the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and contains a sequence of 'We will' statements. Until or unless this plan is revised on the back of recommendations that may emerge from the Commission, will the Council align its annual reporting towards each of these commitments in the plan and account for the degree of progress against each of them?**

**Question 1b: A report on climate is presented to the Neighbourhood & Scrutiny Committee each May. Could the Council put a link to this report on the Hive to improve accessibility?**

- **CC** The Climate Action Plan was based on identified ambition and incorporated a £100 million request for funding to deliver against that ambition. The money was

never going to be forthcoming from the Council. Instead, action reverted to reporting, as and when, against just those areas where delivery was happening.

- Had the level 3 devolution deal progressed Cornwall Council would have done more on retrofit, energy planning powers and those powers mentioned in the level 3 deal.
- Cornwall Council are working on a refresh of the Climate Action Plan, the commitments therein and linking it to the emerging Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP). Henceforth, we will concentrate on reporting against actions we said that we can do but, recognising that it will not get us to Net Zero.
- The Climate Action Plan looked at what could be done against the Climate Emergency declaration, not specifically what was necessary to get us to Net Zero.
- Priority areas have been retrofit, which has not progressed far enough, although Cornwall Council have started the housing decarb strategy, the Forest for Cornwall (on trajectory) and the Climate Emergency Development Plan Document.
  
- **CCAC** Is there a point in reporting a recognition that some actions cannot be done because you have not got the money?
  
- **CC** The Climate Emergency Action Plan was a snapshot at the time. In fact, there are actions underway now that were not in the original plan but will be in the refresh.
- This will include a procurement forward plan for contracts that are being retendered, such as home care. Looking forward Cornwall Council will look at decarbonising the taxi sector and the leisure strategy.
- When the annual report comes to Scrutiny Committee in July you will see more granular reporting against a set of wider actions. It will provide a traffic light progress aspect and will delve into the scope 3 areas of responsibility.
- Examples of wider actions include setting up a green champions network and the 10-15 actions being pursued by Corserv as part of the delivery of their own Net Zero plan.
- Hence the majority of actions in the original Climate Action Plan are not lost; actually the majority are being taken forward.
- The reports Cornwall Council are working on at the moment (which go to cabinet in May) include about 25 pages covering what Cornwall Council are doing, how specifically it links with national policy and also what is needed to go further and faster. However, Cornwall Council reporting on Carbon Neutral Cornwall does not cover everything that is going on across Cornwall, in communities, in households, in businesses.
  
- **CCAC** Cornwall Council mentioned traffic lights. That would be helpful as the reader / observer will be looking to glean an impression about how far things have progressed.
  
- It would also be helpful if reports identified where 'we will's' have been truncated into something else or superseded.

- **CC** In reporting Cornwall Council will use key indicators that tell us if they are heading towards this or that target. For e.g. Cornwall Council have set the target for halving the emissions of the Council by 2026.
- The \* link has just been put up to the report page to share with Cornwall Climate Action Committee. It has the Cornwall Council quarterly report, the Key Performance Indicators and progress against different areas.
- Also put up is a \*link to the annual report where Cornwall Council Greenhouse Gas account is together with a breakdown of where the emissions came from and the progress against different areas.
- Cornwall Council do have \*links to these reports on the Hive. We will check that they are working accurately.

## **2. Community Adaptation Plans**

There is an expectation that each parish and town council will compile their own community adaptation plan. Influence on these comes from the Environment Agency, the Cornwall Community Flood Forum, and the local Community Area Partnership and for context any emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan pertaining to their area.

The process of creating a plan is demanding of time and expertise and it cannot be assumed that these resources are available to all parish or town councils. In recognition of this the Council has indicated that it could place a template on the Hive to aid the preparation of Community Adaptation Plans.

**Question 2a: Has the Council identified all the strands that would need to come together in the making of a community adaptation plan?**

**Question 2b: From this, has the Council progressed on producing a template, to upload onto the Hive, for local councils to use as a checklist and framework when working up their own community adaptation plan?**

- **CC** The Devon, Cornwall and IoS adaptation strategy has been completed.
- The Cornwall Adaptation Strategy has started and will build on this and also accommodate the climate risks identified in the climate risk assessment document. It will also account for area differences, e.g. between Bodmin Moor and Looe. This process will inform the revision of the Climate Emergency Development Plan Document (CEDPD) which is scheduled to start next year and also the coastal management zones.
- The risk assessment will set the strands that each area adaptation plan should build in. In this connection the Star Project ran pilots in Looe, Par and St Blazey and separately Cornwall Council were selected by the government and the Environment Agency to receive funds for work in Bude.
- Lessons learned will inform the approach across Cornwall.
- Rather than a template being put on the Hive it will be more like a toolkit so as to accommodate the wide variation in capacity, the will to progress and actual physical differences across Cornwall.

- The toolkit will tell respective town and parish councils who they need to speak to and where to get information.
- **CCAC** Cornwall Climate Action Committee thought that sounded better than a template, which might end up as a tick box exercise. Of course, there will need to be signposting to the Hive, where the toolkit is.
- **CC** Cornwall Council are close to appointing someone to really take hold of the Hive, as it is one of those sites that is only as good as it is looked after. The Community Area Partnerships (CAPs) are now formed, and the majority should have established subgroups specific to climate change and the development of toolkits will be part of their conversations.

### 3. Scope 3 Emissions

The importance of being able to measure Scope 3 emissions, when developing a climate change strategy and informing decision making is highlighted by the Carbon Trust. However, aside from the Carbon Trust, there are other methodologies available to describe supply chain emissions and in this connection the Council is understood to have engaged with two different assessment processes. Firstly, it participated in the government backed Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) and received an A rated assessment and secondly, the Council instructed a contract with the company 'CO2 Analysis'.

The **CDP process** does not apparently lead to a rating based upon quantified measurement of accepted Scope 3 emissions, namely purchased goods and transport, logistics, product use and disposal. Indeed, CDP says, scores alone are not a comprehensive metric of a company's level of sustainability or 'green-ness' but indicate the level of action reported under the headings: 1) Disclosure; 2) Awareness; 3) Management; 4) Leadership. CDP goes onto state: 'Targets can relate to Scope 1, Scope 2 and/or Scope 3 emissions in full or in part'.

The **CO2 Analysis** contract seeks to cover the Scope 3 problem, acknowledging that the bulk of most organisations' carbon emissions are in their supply chain. The GreenInsight carbon accounting engine goes through all procurement data in order to analyse supply chain emissions. However, maintained schools and county farms, together with adult social care appear to be out of scope for accounting by CO2 Analysis!

**Question 3a: Could the Council talk around what it was able to draw down from its CDP rating and the findings from CO2 Analysis?**

**Question 3b: Does the Council acknowledge that there is further to go to reach confidence in the extent of and type of supply chain (Scope 3) emissions?**

**Question 3c: The Council indicates that it is collecting some data itself. Is this approach expected to make good the shortfall in the data needed to quantify all Scope 3 emissions?**

**Question 3d: If not, does it envisage the question of how to bottom out Scope 3 as a valid subject for the Commission to ponder?**

- **CC** Cornwall Council were only one of 13% of regions to get the A rating in terms of what we are doing. The CDP rating does not itself speak to the ability of Cornwall Council to deliver against targets.
- **CCAC** To clarify... CDP is not expected to quantify in precise terms the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions?
- **CC** Yes, CDP is really about reporting about what activity is planned, for example CDP will ask: have you got an emissions inventory for your council, have you got one for your region?
- The slides show improvement in what is reported in the annual report to Scrutiny Committee. The work Cornwall Council has done with 'CO<sub>2</sub> Analysis' is specific to their supply chain. When it comes to Scope 3 their supply chain is just one of the Scope 3 categories, not the totality!
- The work Cornwall Council are doing with 'CO<sub>2</sub> Analysis' sits alongside work we have been doing with other Scope 3 areas that we have divided into 4 – 5 categories.
- Examples are:
  - Staff Commuting we will separate out emissions from home working, but add them in to commute derived emissions to provide a picture for staff;
  - Corserve is a trading company and obliged to report on emissions. On the back of this capacity, it has its own net zero plan in place for 2030.
- Group companies are separated out of supply chain emissions. Whilst Cornwall Council has a level of influence we do not operationally or financially control these emissions. We are working with them to establish a base line, which they have done, and Cornwall Council are supporting them to report in their planning.
- Examples include:
  - Treveth;
  - Celtic Sea Power;
  - Langarth.
- Next are Cornwall Council's tenanted assets: 10,000 social housing stock.
- Cornwall Council have about 4,000 commercial assets that we have tenants for across Cornwall such as our maintained schools, Council farms and leisure centres.
- Each asset type needs its own special intervention applied to it and that they are separated out in terms of assessing Scope 3 emissions.
- On work Cornwall Council are doing with 'CO<sub>2</sub> Analysis', their supply chain is split into 3 different categories of spend. A DEFRA based carbon factor is applied for each type of spend which gives you an emission factor. Until the point when Cornwall Council has carbon reporting rolled out across our supply chain, this is the only way of measuring carbon in our supply chain.
- **CCAC** Looking at the Scrutiny Committee slides, is this tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>?

- **CC** Yes, it is equivalents thus includes all of the gases. The next evolution is to be able to extract data from individual contracts via a more assertive approach in forward procurement planning as mentioned earlier.
- For example in waste, can Cornwall Council move to using electric vehicles?
- Cornwall Council is working with a company called Local Partnership, which is a consulting arm of the Local Government Association. They are helping Cornwall Council develop a new procurement strategy which it is hoped will be in place by the end of Quarter 2.
- **CCAC** The challenge appears to be: how to put an intelligible construction on all this complex work when reporting. Is this going to be difficult?
- **CC** It is, as it relates to Scope 3 emissions!
- For example, the existing home care contract is going to change next year and will be very different in nature. Cornwall Council have a precarious situation of home care in Cornwall made up of many quite small businesses, which together makes up the council's biggest area of spend. It will be necessary to look at the contract type case by case. What Cornwall Council need to do is articulate and present the systems, and they believe they are progressing on that.
- **CCAC** Could Cornwall Climate Action Committee share evidence of very good practice? E.g. small providers in the adult elderly social care sector.
- **CC** Yes. They have their established networks. Cornwall Council will be moving towards zonal commissioning in order to cut down on journey time people have to do. Route planning software will be deployed to enable providers, who could not afford this alone, to improve their route planning. Next in this sector being worked on are options for Cornwall Council staff to drive low carbon vehicles, but this needs a whole sector response.
- **CCAC** Are there not approaches around seed funding, so that if staff need to buy a new vehicle they don't buy another fossil vehicle?
- **CC** The emissions that staff create, who use their own cars for work purposes, far outweigh any fleet emissions. Cornwall Council has got economies of scale that mean they can scale up pool car access. In addition, Cornwall Council are talking to other providers e.g. NHS, so as to have a more Cornwall wide response. This could provide a base for a community car model as well. In this connection we currently have consultants looking at this.
- **CCAC** If the Commission gets its teeth into this subject, it might be able to play a part in relating to the other sectors. In the work you are doing have you noticed that organisations are aware of scope 3 emissions a lot more than they used to be?

- **CC** Cornwall Council's top 100 suppliers are the majority and are very aware of scope 3 emissions, but in the case of small businesses in the supply chain they are not aware!

#### **4. Potholes!**

Cornwall's highways have been under attack this winter from heavy rainfall with February in particular breaking new records. Government revenue support to address the mounting backlog of maintenance and repair is evidently insufficient.

**Question 4a: Taking the three separate aspects together, namely: pothole repair, gulley emptying plus outlet jetting, and re-surfacing, does the Council have a figure for bringing these maintenance and repair aspects back up to standard?**

**Question 4b: In the context of adapting the highway network to mounting climate impact, as presaged by February's record rain total, has the Council identified a cost for upgrading roads to cope?**

- **CC** No, Cornwall Council do not have a figure to bring the roads back to standard.
- Cornwall Council knows what they spend on the roads each year and can roughly estimate the dilapidation but cannot give that level of cost detail.
- Cornwall Council spend around £25 million per year on maintenance, repair, gulley cleaning etc. Cornwall Council are required to monitor carriageways, but road drainage provision is more difficult to monitor.
- The £5 million allocated by the government was ringfenced for specifically potholes. (NOTE: not gulleys, outlets or re-surfacing). It has though, allowed Cornwall Council to re-allocate that part of the core highways budget, which would have gone to fixing potholes, to gulley clearing and other resilience related activities. However, many of the easements to discharge from the highway are outdated and are a constant challenge!
- **CC** Work on adaptation will begin to consider some of those highway aspects by looking at a strategic level. A piece of work underway at the moment is visiting every service management team across the Council to look at the increasing climatic risks, drivers of this plus the impacts on services and moreover getting them to think about building this into budget. For example, flooded roads lead to a cascade of impacts in terms of commuting, school attendance, jobs that can't be done and deliveries. The Star project in St Austell has brought together all these considerations. It is on YouTube/Vimeo.
- **CCAC** To give a context of what needs to be done, accounting for projected trends has anybody assessed the money implications, even assuming you are not going to get the money?
- **CC** Whilst there is a notion of the level of work, this is not solely centred around Council assets. There are SWW assets as well and much highways run-off is going

through combined Council / SWW sewers and other SWW assets. There is an economic and social cost to all this to be factored in, and that is a key point.

## 5. Retrofit Company

**Context.** It is hoped that a change of government may reverse the illegality of raising rents to cover energy saving retrofit, on the basis that the energy cost savings are shared between the tenant and the need to fund an organised programme of energy saving retrofit.

The Council has budgeted £10 million towards fixing specifically mould and damp across its 10,500 tenanted estate. On the matter of energy saving retrofit however, this is one of the objectives for the LAEP project, although this is set in the knowledge that it would cost in the region of £20 billion to get all CC properties up to a decent standard.

Tackling these issues will doubtless involve a multi-pronged approach. One issue in relation to retrofit is that existing insulation companies are generally doing the more profitable private work. This avoids the barriers presented by compliance with regulations and paperwork that the CC require. The Council has acknowledged that if they had their own Cornwall retrofitting company, they could jump these barriers because they would be both the customer and the supplier.

**Question 5a: Has the Council advanced its consideration of setting up its own arms-length retrofitting company?**

**Question 5b: In the call amongst the local government community for multi-year revenue support settlements, espoused by Linda Taylor on the “Today” programme of the 28<sup>th</sup> February, what are the Council’s views on the prospects of long term programmed funding emerging, instead of one year settlements plus one off gesture funding, that has characterised the approach hitherto?**

- CC Cornwall Council are reviewing options relating to an arm’s length company here and as part of this we have a group of companies in the retrofit sector taking a look at how they might meet demand including across the Council’s own housing stock. One pinch point is the shortage of trained workers in this sector.
- In terms of the multi-year funding Cornwall Council had this in our sights through a request of government had the level 3 devolution deal progressed.
- Minor progress has been made in that some funding streams are two years instead of just one, but it still won’t meet supply chain needs. This was specifically looked into by the Southwest Net Zero Hub. They have established that it will take hundreds of years to meet net zero across the southwest. Cornwall Council even attended a conference and flagged it up then. The efficiencies of, and funding challenges, for a street-by-street approach rather than piecemeal house by house are now being picked up.
- A key example of the discordance in funding can be seen where; in a semi detached house one side is eligible for retrofit under a particular fund, which is not available to the other half, who in turn may get funding from a different source. Coordination

and efficiency are foregone, as you cannot use the same scaffolding across both sides of the semi-detached dwelling.

- The policy makers to whom this particular scenario was put were gobsmacked! Generally, government agents had their reasons for setting up particular funds but had clearly not considered the practical considerations when you multiply that up. Instead, there are unnecessary opportunity costs in setting up and closing down individual contracts.
- With an election around the corner the current spending review is getting to its end. After the election there will be another at which point we can lobby for long term funding.

\* **Cornwall Council website**, quick link to the reports and reviews page on the Hive: This brings together key Cornish reports, including links to the action plan, inventories, performance reports and DPD. <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/reports-and-reviews>

#### **Useful background reading:**

- Link to PCAN: What is a local climate commission? Place Based Climate Action Network (pcancities.org.uk) <https://www.pcancities.org.uk/what-local-climatecommission>

- Notes from previous meetings between members of CCAC and CC:

- 2022-2024

<https://www.cornwallclimateactioncoalition.org.uk/meetingcouncilnotes.html>

- Prior to Oct 2022:

<https://www.cornwallclimateactioncoalition.org.uk/meetingswithcornwallcouncil.htm>