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**‘Hyndburn Green Review’
Overview & Scrutiny Panel Report
24th October 2019**

**Approved by the Resources
Overview & Scrutiny Committee on
31st October 2019**

Hyndburn Green Review Panel- Membership

Councillor Stephen Button (Co-Chair)

*Councillor Jenny Molineux (Co-Chair)

Councillor Noordad Aziz

Councillor Michael Miller

Councillor Tim O’Kane

Joan West

** Councillor Jenny Molineux became a Cabinet Member in May 2019 and therefore left the panel at this time.*

Contents

1. Introduction and Terms of Reference	3
1.1 Formation of the Scrutiny Panel	3
1.2 Establishing the Terms of Reference	3
2. Scrutiny Review Process	4
2.1 Meetings.....	4
2.2 Consultation and Research	6
2.3 Gathering Information and Producing a Report	6
2.4 Thanks.....	6
3. Findings of the Panel	7
3.1 Hyndburn's Current Climate Friendliness.....	7
3.2 Woodland Coverage	8
3.3 Air Quality	9
3.4 Plastics, Fair Trade Products & Paper Usage.....	10
3.5 Hyndburn Borough Council Buildings.....	10
3.6 Environmental Services	12
3.7 Procurement	15
3.8 Corporate	16
3.9 Climate Emergency	19
3.10 Consultation with Prospects Foundation	20
4. Summary and Recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel	21

1. Introduction and Terms of Reference

1.1 Formation of the Scrutiny Panel

1.1.1 At its meeting on 11th September 2018, the Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee resolved to establish a Scrutiny Panel to look at environmental issues which affect Hyndburn. The Scrutiny Panel would be called “The Hyndburn Green Review.”

1.1.2 It was determined at that meeting that the quantity of work required, background research to be carried out and consultation with Hyndburn Borough Council departments, Lancashire County Council and local organisations needed could not be done thoroughly within the confines of a formal committee meeting, therefore the Hyndburn Green Review Scrutiny Panel was established.

1.1.3 It was agreed that:

(1) That the Committee establishes a panel of between 4-5 members to conduct the review.

(2) That the panel be responsible for appointing its own Chair, setting its own terms of reference and review plan.

(3) That the Panel reports back to the Committee upon completion of the review.

1.1.4 It was agreed that Councillors Jenny Molineux and Stephen Button would act as Co-Chairs of the Panel, and that an open invitation should be submitted to all non-cabinet members to become part of the panel. Councillors Noordad Aziz, Tim O’Kane and Michael Miller were appointed to the Panel, as was Joan West, a member of the Green Party who the panel determined could add some real knowledge to the review being carried out.

1.2 Establishing the Terms of Reference

1.2.1 It was agreed that the Panel would set its own terms of reference and project plan. There was much debate on establishing the particular terms of reference, with several variations discussed before agreement was made.

1. To review Hyndburn Borough Council’s contribution to improving the environment including, but not limited to, energy usage, carbon footprint, recycling and service areas linked to the green agenda.

2. To investigate whether or not the Council has environmental objectives, and if so, its performance against those objectives.

3. To review on a wider scale, environmental issues in Hyndburn which are not related to Hyndburn Borough Council, including, but not limited to LCC, transport, landfill and other organisations with a green agenda.

1.2.2 In order to effectively follow the terms of reference set, the Panel agreed the following set of objectives it wished to achieve.

1. Research any local performance indicators linked to the environment

2. Consult with relevant Hyndburn Borough Council Cabinet Members, Heads of Service or other Officers to establish the current contribution to improving the environment and any planned policies or work which will have a positive contribution to the environment.

3. Consult with relevant Members / Officers from LCC to establish environmental issues in Hyndburn linked to LCC.

4. Consult with external organisations regarding their contributions to the Green Agenda.

5. Make recommendations, both internally and externally, on environmental improvements that can be made in Hyndburn.

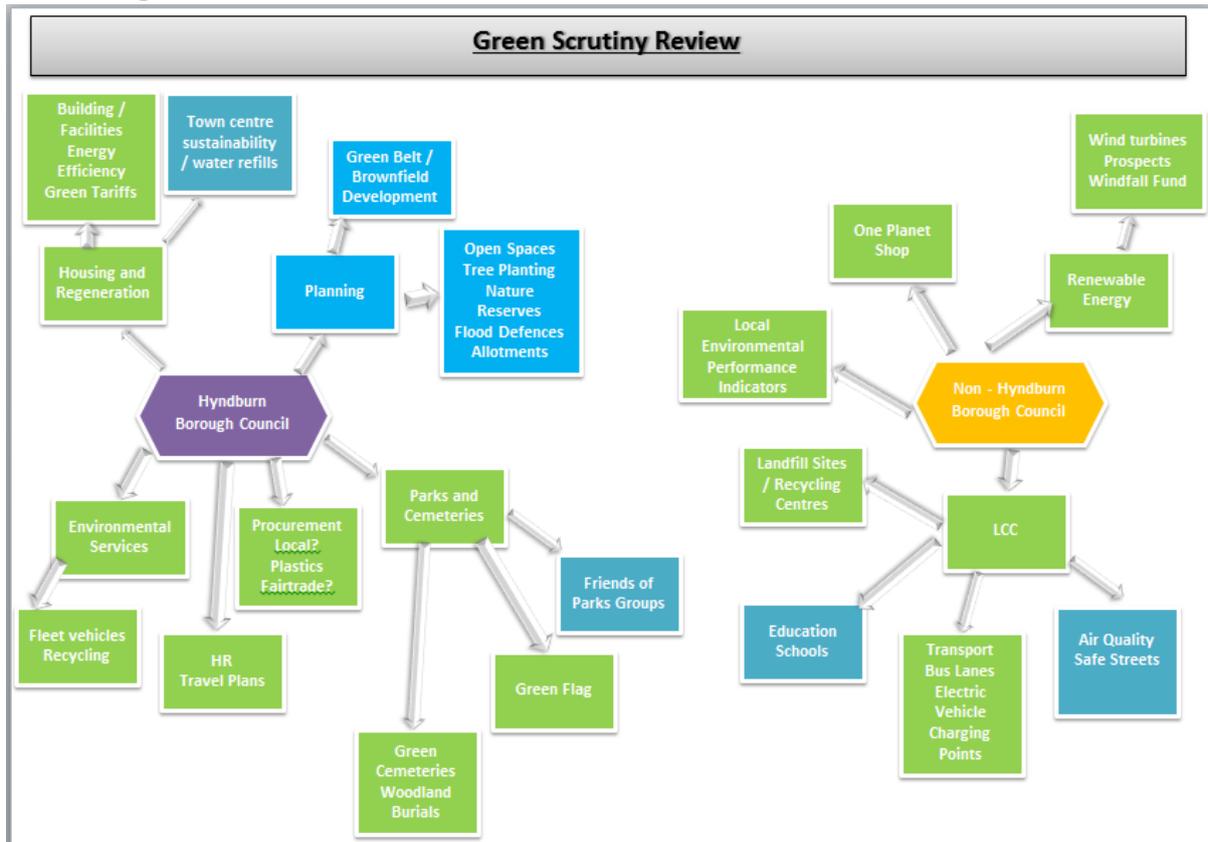
2. Scrutiny Review Process

2.1 Meetings

2.1.1 The panel held its first meeting on the 13th November 2018. This initial scoping meeting would determine exactly what Members wished to get out of the review and the scrutiny review process. In the main, this meeting took the form of a brainstorming session which would establish what path the review took. The subjective of this review had potentially endless angles which could be considered relevant, therefore the panel felt it was important to narrow down exactly where they wished the review to focus.

2.1.2 Figure 1 shows a summary of the thought shower session carried out at the first panel meetings. Topics highlighted green would be considered a priority for the review. Topics highlighted blue may also be considered in the review should capacity allow:

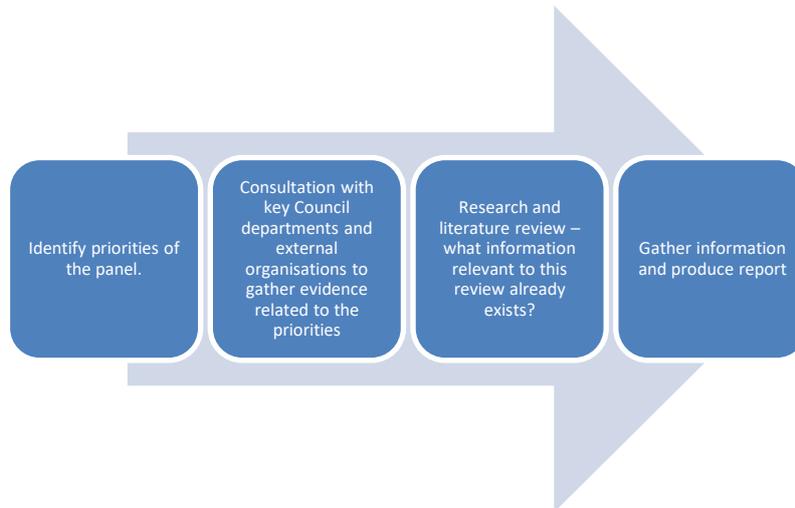
Figure 1



2.1.3 It was also agreed that the Overview & Scrutiny Officer would carry out some desk top research prior to the second meeting. This would look internally at Hyndburn Borough Council, and the information gained from this research would help to inform which Councillors/Officers the Panel wished to speak to.

2.1.4 The Overview & Scrutiny Officer wrote to the Director and Deputy Director for Environmental Services, Environmental Health Manager, Regeneration and Property Manager, Facilities Manager, Head of Policy & Organisational Development, Chief Planning Officer along with Planning Officers and requested information relevant to the review. Information was also requested from Lancashire County Council and Prospects Foundation.

2.1.5 The following Scrutiny Review Process was implemented:



2.2 Consultation and Research

2.2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Officer wrote to Service Heads/Portfolio Holders requesting specific information outlined by the Panel. Officers/Members were then invited along to a series of meetings to respond to more questions if necessary.

2.2.2 The Panel also identified external organisations, including Prospects Foundation, who they felt could add value to the Panel. External organisations were therefore also asked to provide a range of information and attend meetings/respond to questions.

2.2.3 The HBC Policy Officer provided additional support, researching local information on environmental indicators which could be presented to the Committee.

2.2.4 Although the intention of the Panel was to carry out a review both internally and externally, the Panel chose to focus more on internal factors as they felt that this is where they could have more influence.

2.3 Gathering Information and Producing a Report

2.3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Officer and Chair of the Panel collated all the information to produce this report. A final meeting was held with the Panel to agree the recommendations, which was held on the 24th October 2019.

2.4 Thanks

2.4.1 The Scrutiny Panel would like to record its thanks to all those persons who took part in the consultation on this scrutiny review topic and in particular,

expresses its appreciation and thanks to the undermentioned individuals who contributed their time and expertise during the information gathering stage of the process:-

- **Prospects Foundation**
- **Councillor Paul Cox**
- **Steve Riley, Executive Director (Environment)**
- **Craig Haraben, Deputy Head of Environmental Services**
- **Phillip Livesey, EHO Environmental Protection**
- **Stuart Sambrook, Policy Manager**
- **Anne Hourican, Planning Officer**
- **Kirsten Burnett, Head of Policy and OD**

3. Findings of the Panel

3.1 Hyndburn's Current Climate Friendliness

- 3.1.1 Hyndburn has a population of approximately 80,000, with 36,800 residential dwellings and a strong service and manufacturing industry. In Hyndburn as in most places, the manufacturing sector has shed jobs over the years whilst the service sector has grown to become a far greater source of employee jobs. However there still continues to be a bias towards a larger proportion of employees in the manufacturing sector in Lancashire and Hyndburn than is the national norm and a lower proportion of jobs in the service sector. There are plans in place for the development of strategic employment sites in Whitebirk (already commenced) and Huncoat. 51% of workers in Hyndburn commute less than 5km (compared to 40% nationally).
- 3.1.2 In 2017, CO2 emissions for Hyndburn were 375,000 tonnes. It is not possible for the Scrutiny Panel to estimate the carbon footprint of Hyndburn Borough Council due to a lack of information available.
- 3.1.3 Several local initiatives go some way to offsetting the 375,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions, including:
- The Windfarm in Oswaldtwistle produced 83,677MWh of electricity in 2017/18, which, on average is enough to power 2/3s of all homes in Hyndburn for a year.
 - Whinny Hill Landfill – converts waste gas to energy for burning, enough to power over 9,000 homes.
 - Lancashire County Council have begun the installation of 150 electric vehicle charging points across Lancashire. To date, three have been installed in Hyndburn with more to follow. This

improvement to infrastructure will encourage more people to opt for electric vehicles.

- 3.1.4 Hyndburn currently has 707 ha of woodland coverage. The CO₂ capture from this level of woodland is 3,535 tonnes per year, equivalent to the carbon emissions of 750 people and slightly less than 1% of the Borough's total emissions. Total woodland coverage for Hyndburn is around 10% (including small but significant wooded areas). This is low compared to the UK average of 13%, with the UK also being one of the least wooded countries in Europe.

3.2 Woodland Coverage

- 3.2.1 The Council runs a very pro-active woodland management programme for the ongoing care and enhancement of its own woodland resource. A current priority is to increase the diversity of species to strengthen the woodlands in the longer term, with new tree and understory planting every year and encouraging natural regeneration. Grant investments help to improve public access, community involvement and volunteering activities.
- 3.2.2 Some highlights include 7000 trees (over 7 ha) planted at Spout House Community Woodland in 2014 and 2015 by HBC and LCC, 3000 in the Hedgerow restoration and 1750 at Peel Park and the Coppice in 2014 and 2015 by HBC.
- 3.2.3 Woodland cover in Hyndburn was previously doubled in 10 – 15 years, from the late 1980's through to the early 2000's, with the Hyndburn Urban Forestry and Elwood programmes creating some 40 new woodlands.
- 3.2.4 Agreeing a target for more woodland creation would bring multiple benefits including natural flood management, carbon capture and other climate change benefits, and help to recreate strong ecological networks. Wooded landscapes will also contribute to the striking scenery of Pennine Lancashire, with attractive walks, recreation, health and well-being benefits right on the doorstep of urban areas.
- 3.2.5 Hyndburn should continue to stretch good practice by setting a target to reach 12% woodland cover by 2030, which would need some 150 hectares of new woodland. And set an overall aim to reach 15% woodland cover by 2050. With a mix of opportunities as they arise plus strategic identification of areas to maximise benefits such as strengthening and protecting existing woodlands, linking woodland and other habitat areas through ecological networks, planting in locations to benefit water quality and natural flood management. Careful assessments should ensure that land with other

significant ecological potential, such as wildflower-rich meadows or peat moorland, would also be enhanced.

3.2.6 Woodland creation would contribute to comprehensive landscape scale habitat enhancements including moorland restoration, meadow enhancement, hedgerows, river valley improvements and more. New delivery mechanisms, with an emphasis on effective incentives for private landowners, will be needed. Collaboration with the excellent environmental organisations including Ribble Rivers Trust, Prospects Foundation, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and many others would be the most effective way to achieve progress.

3.2.7 Recommendation: That Cabinet sets ambitious targets and dates of increasing woodland coverage in Hyndburn.

3.3 Air Quality

3.3.1 This was the first topic the Panel wished to review. A series of questions were submitted to the Environmental Health Officer and responses given to the Panel, alongside the latest Air Quality Annual Statement Report for Hyndburn.

3.3.2 The data provided showed that there are currently no major issues with regards to air pollution in Hyndburn, with the exception of a site in Great Harwood where waste was being burnt illegally (this has now ceased). There are no Air Quality Management Areas. Currently, the only pollutant measured in Hyndburn is NO₂. This is agreed by DEFRA and is in line with other areas in Pennine Lancashire. It should be noted that nationally over 90% of designated air quality management areas are caused by NO₂.

3.3.3 Additional data provided by Lancashire Insights found that Hyndburn has the worst rate of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution (4.2%) in Lancashire, however this figure is still significantly below the England average (5.1%).

3.3.4 Panel Members were concerned regarding the placement of the tubes which measure pollutants, but were reassured these were installed in locations corresponding to DEFRA guidance, tubes are prepared and analysed by a DEFRA approved laboratory which carry out all necessary quality control measures to ensure the accuracy of our results.

3.3.5 The Panel followed up the additional meeting with further questions, which they received responses to.

3.3.6 Panel Members felt that although there were no areas identified as air quality management areas, the Council should still be doing all it can to not only closely monitor but also to help reduce air pollution.

3.3.7 Recommendation: That the Council develops an Air Quality Strategy, outlining how it will monitor and aim to improve air pollution in Hyndburn (To include active monitoring at the Hare & Hounds Junction, Clayton le Moors).

3.4 Plastics, Fair Trade Products & Paper Usage

3.4.1 Information was provided to the Committee on use of the above products in Council buildings.

3.4.2 The Council use single use plastic cups for water dispensers in meetings / offices. These are standard Polypropylene. Approximately 4000 are purchased annually at a cost of £80. The Panel felt that the Council should immediately cease this process and switch to a more environmentally friendly option, which would have little cost.

3.4.3 Recommendation: That the Council ends the purchase of single use plastic cups. Officers/Councillors should be encouraged to use their own multi use bottles/cups/glasses at the Council's various office water dispensers. Should Cabinet not deem this feasible, there are numerous more environmentally friendly single use cups available, including biodegradable and compostable paper cups.

3.4.4 The Council does not currently use Fair Trade Products. The Panel felt that for the small additional costs, the Council has a corporate social responsibility to switch.

3.4.5 Recommendation: That the Council switches to fair trade tea, coffee and sugar products and where possible these are sourced from local independent retailers.

3.4.6 A brief audit found the Council currently uses the highest grade of recycled paper. It was thought that this may be coincidental rather than policy, therefore the panel wished to ensure that the Council continued to use the highest grade of recycled paper.

3.4.7 Recommendation: That the Council adopts a policy of using only the highest grade of recycled paper.

3.5 Hyndburn Borough Council Buildings

- 3.5.1 The Panel's primary aim for consideration of this topic was to review what energy saving measures have been implemented in the Council's facilities stock, how effective these energy saving measures had been and what plans the Housing and Regeneration department had for future environmental improvements to the Council's facilities.
- 3.5.2 The Council own numerous buildings throughout the Borough. These are inclusive of the Council's Offices (Scaitcliffe House and the Town Hall) and Work's Departments (Willows Lane Depot and CVMU), and a number of smaller operation buildings / pavilions across our network of Parks. Several Community Buildings are owned by the Council, most of which are leased to Community Groups. The Council owns two Leisure Centres which both include swimming pools, currently leased long term to Hyndburn Leisure and a theatre and arts centre in Oswaldtwistle, currently leased to the Civic Arts Trust.
- 3.5.3 As one of the Borough's largest estate owners, the Panel were pleased to see that the Council has been proactive in terms of environmental improvements to buildings. Below is a summary of environmental improvement works carried out at Council buildings over the past five years.
- **Installation of 20kw Photovoltaic System (Solar Panels) to Scaitcliffe House** – This has led to a significant reduction in electricity usage from the grid and even generates enough electricity for the Council to sell back to the National grid.
 - **Improvements at Leisure Centres** – This has led to a significant reduction in energy usage at Hyndburn's two leisure centres and swimming pools, with a schedule of works including improved LED lighting, voltage optimisation scheme and pool depth reduction.
 - **Boiler Replacements-** The Haworth Art Gallery upgraded their boiler system and more will be replaced at other sites as part of the planned asset improvement programme.
 - **Christmas & Street Lighting-** All festive lights have been upgraded to LED and are 24v and some amenity lighting such as street lights have been replaced. Where possible when lights fail they are being upgraded to LED.
- 3.5.4 The Panel were pleased that the Council's Capital Fund was often used for energy saving measures. The Panel felt that the Council should prioritise energy saving capital works where possible.

- 3.5.5 **Recommendation: That consideration is given to adapting the Capital Programme Application process in order to add a greater weighting to projects which are aimed at saving energy.**
- 3.5.6 Unfortunately, no monitoring information was available to be provided to the panel to demonstrate the successes of energy efficiency measures taken. Anecdotally, the panel were assured that the numerous energy saving measures will have reduced the Council's Carbon Footprint, but detailed readings have not been completed and were unable to be carried out in the immediate future.
- 3.5.7 **Recommendation: That the Council should monitor its energy usage on all Council owned buildings and report annually on this to Overview and Scrutiny or another appropriate Committee.**
- 3.5.8 The Panel were keen to explore the use of green energy tariffs. No information was provided to the Panel on current energy tariffs used. Most energy suppliers offer 'green' electricity tariffs. These seek to support renewable energy. The two main types on offer are green supply tariffs and green funds. Previously, green energy tariffs were often significantly more expensive than standard tariffs, but this is no longer the case. The Panel felt that the Council should adopt a policy to use Green Energy Tariffs only.
- 3.5.9 **Recommendation: That the Council should adopt a policy of procuring only green energy tariffs for its buildings.**

3.6 Environmental Services

- 3.6.1 The Environmental Services Department at the Council is responsible for a range of services provided by Hyndburn Borough Council linked to the green agenda. The Service Area is responsible for Parks and Cemeteries, Open Spaces, Waste Collection and Recycling, CVMU, Fleet Vehicles, Food Safety, Trees and Events.
- 3.6.2 The Panel had previously identified several of these items of areas they wished to explore. The Director, Deputy Head and Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services attended a Panel meeting, submitting a report and responding to numerous questions.
- 3.6.3 Fleet Vehicles – the Panel were interested to find out what work had been done in recent years to reduce our vehicle emissions or improve fuel efficiency. As the Council's fleet was replaced, the vast majority came in with the improved Euro 6 rated engines. The shift to hybrid and fully electric vehicles is now gathering pace, the first all-electric refuse collection vehicles are now on the market, with one manufacturer who is based in Lancashire currently trialling these vehicles in the South. It is estimated that currently, the cost of an electric refuse vehicle would be close to double that of a diesel

engine making a switch right now difficult. However, as technology progresses it is likely that prices may even out. The Council's waste collection fleet is due to be replaced in 2021 and electric vehicles will be considered at this point.

3.6.4 Recommendation: That the Council considers the introduction of electric Refuse Collection Vehicles from 2021. The Council should monitor the cost implications of such a switch to determine how feasible this would be as an option for Hyndburn.

3.6.5 It was reported that the removal of stint and finish and fuel efficient driver training will have helped improve fuel efficiencies, however, due to fundamental changes in collection rounds and the introduction of new more efficient vehicles, it is not possible to quantify how much these actions have improved fuel efficiency.

3.6.6 Recycling – Hyndburn Borough Council introduced a new recycling system in 2018, replacing the old sacks and plastic tubs with 2 new wheeled bins. Figures for 18/19 are not yet available, however, an increase in recycling is anticipated. For 2017/18, 5,748 tonnes of paper, card, glass, metal and plastic which was an increase of 363 tonnes on the previous year. Garden waste sent for composting has reduced, which members of the panel attributed to the introduction of the charge for green bins. Hyndburn's overall dry recycling rate was 23.6%, ranking is 188 out of 350 authorities. The rate for garden waste is lower at 9.26%, but the Portfolio Holder pointed out that this figure should be viewed with caution due to the high percentage of terraced houses with no gardens in the Borough. In terms of waste collection, the Council is number 1 in the North West and 15th nationally for least amount of household waste collected kg per head. An even higher ranking is expected when the next round of figures are published.

3.6.7 Recommendation: That the Environmental Services Department be commended for their excellent work in reducing the amount of waste collected.

3.6.8 Parks – The Portfolio Holder pointed out that this is one particular area where Councillors, staff and residents should be particularly proud of for Hyndburn. The Council currently has 8 Green Flag parks, with a possible 9th (Rhyddings Park) on the way later in the year. Members of the Panel questioned how the parks maintenance budget was allocated, as they had received some public concern that significant investment in formal parks had been to the detriment of investment in less formal open spaces. The Deputy Head Environmental Services emphasised significant investment had gone into informal open spaces including the Coppice, Rothwell and Clayton Forrest Park, which had all benefited massively through increased footfall.

- 3.6.9 Cemeteries – The new cemetery between Rishton and Great Harwood is now open and burials have taken place. The Panel were delighted to hear that the cemetery will offer a wide range of choices including green and woodland burials. The cemetery will likely provide for over 100 years. Accrington Cemetery is also one of the Green Flag parks.
- 3.6.10 New cremators were recently installed which are significantly more efficient, however, due to lack of monitoring it is not possible to provide the exact figures for energy reduction in the new cremators.
- 3.6.11 Sustainable Urban Draining Systems – systems of this type are installed at Willows Lane and a new one at Rhyddings Park. Systems of this type allow rain water to be harvested in a big tank and reused. Members of the Panel were keen to encourage further use of systems like this, and other grey water systems at Council facilities.
- 3.6.12 **Recommendation: That the Council considers incorporating Sustainable Urban Draining Systems or Grey Water systems when planning relevant major facility works.**
- 3.6.13 Pesticides and Insecticides – The Panel wanted to know what pesticides or insecticides the Council used in parks, green spaces and grass verges etc. The Council undertakes the control of weeds and grass on the highways/footways through a Public Realm agreement on behalf of Lancashire County Council and the County have approved the continued use of glyphosate based products. The Council, through its weed control contractor, treats the footpaths and highways in the Borough using Roundup ProBiactive 450. EU legislation still licences Glyphosate for the purpose of weed control and use in the Council's parks to prevent damage. There are other methods that are promoted to control weeds i.e. burning, hot water, soap foam, hand hoe removal etc. but these are either not as efficient and/or are a substantially higher cost. The Council also uses a number of other chemicals.
- 3.6.14 It was pointed out that their use is kept to a minimum with chemicals only being used where absolutely necessary. Members wanted to know if the Council had considered banning these substances, particularly glyphosate on the back of recent news stories coming out of the USA. The response was unless legislation prohibits their use or there is a request from members to consider ending the use of glyphosate based and other products highlighted previously, the Service Manager / Supervisors will continue with their use.
- 3.6.15 The Panel discussed the lack of evidence linking glyphosate to diseases which have been highlighted in the press. They also felt that it was highly likely that farmers, in particular, would be using similar or the same chemicals in much greater quantities than the Council does. However, there was a will

from members for the department to at least monitor the market for potentially less harmful products which achieve similar or the same results.

3.6.16 Recommendation: That the Council continues to monitor the market for environmentally friendly products which could be used for the control of weeds, moss and disease etc.

3.7 Procurement

3.7.1 The Panel were interested to find out the carbon footprint of our procurement process, and what measures the Council took to procure in an environmentally friendly manner.

3.7.2 Without a central procurement team (each department procures for themselves) gathering accurate information was always going to be difficult. However, the panel found some evidence to show the Council considers environmental issues in its procurement process.

- Electronic tendering – much of the Council's tendering is now done online using portals such as Constructionline or Contracts Finder. As well as often helping the Council achieve better value for money, this process is often done entirely electronically, reducing the need for the Council to produce large tender packs

- Green Purchasing Guide – As part of the Council's Procurement Policy, the Council has produced a "Guide to Green Purchasing". The guide highlights good environmental practices which officers should take when procuring. The guidance should be used when purchasing all supplies, services and works and when establishing the conditions of a contract with goods or/and service providers. This guidance is to help officers take into account the longer-term benefits and costs when selecting a product or item of equipment. By reviewing the entire life-cycle of a product or equipment officers can choose more environmentally, and economically, sustainable products. A life-cycle analysis includes identifying the environmental effects during manufacture, packaging, transportation, waste and disposal issues, as well as the environmental effects, such as energy and resource consumption, during use. It is not clear when the guide was last updated, or how often those officers that procure actually follow the guidance. The panel were encouraged by the presence of the guide but keen to see a more proactive approach to using it.

3.7.3 Recommendation: That the Cabinet refreshes the Green Purchasing Guide and Officers are encouraged to use it when procuring. To monitor this, Audits could be carried out on random procurements to establish if and how the green purchasing guidance was referred to.

3.8 Corporate

3.8.1 The Panel reviewed the Corporate Strategy and found that:

3.8.2 There are several references to environmental issues throughout the strategy. However, when detailing the Council's strategic priorities for the next five years, any environmental talk is mainly aimed at improvements to parks or the recycling service. The following is an extract from the strategy which summarises the environmental work of the Council:

“The environment, both natural and built, has a significant influence on a person's quality of life. Through effective development management the Council works to maintain and protect the natural environment whilst at the same time ensuring there are sufficient opportunities to meet the development needs of the Borough. We also work to ensure that development across Hyndburn is to a high standard and helps to create an attractive built environment that helps support a good quality of life. The establishment of the two largest local nature reserves in Lancashire at Peel Park and Woodnook Vale demonstrates the Council's commitment to protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Through our Environmental Services we ensure the borough is kept clean and take robust enforcement action against anybody dumping waste illegally.”

3.8.3 There are few, if any green objectives highlighted in the Corporate Strategy, although there maybe a few objectives which have a secondary benefit of environmental improvements.

3.8.4 The Panel are aware that there is a desire from Councillors and Senior Management to improve the Council's green credentials, but felt that this was not currently reflected in the Corporate Strategy.

3.8.5 **Recommendation: That the Corporate Strategy is updated to include environmental priorities of the Council.**

3.8.6 The Panel made several requests around performance monitoring. Most departments were unable to provide performance monitoring information to the Panel as this was not routinely collected in most cases and was not considered a priority. The Panel is aware that Senior Management have considered reintroducing more detailed performance monitoring and feel as though there is an opportunity here to demonstrate the Council's commitment to the green agenda by ensuring every department includes at least one environmental performance indicator to regularly monitor.

3.8.7 **Recommendation: That all departments include a minimum of one “Green” KPI in their suite of performance indicators and performance against these indicators is reported annually to Overview & Scrutiny.**

3.8.8 The Panel looked at the Council's decision making process through Cabinet. It found that this process does not currently highlight any environmental issues a decision taken by Cabinet may have. The Panel felt that a section should be added to the report template which highlights any environmental issues associated with the decision being asked to be taken. This could be in the form of an "Environmental Impact Assessment" similar to the Equality Impact Assessment section which is included on current Cabinet reports.

3.8.9 **Recommendation: That Cabinet considers adding a section to the report template which highlights the environmental impact of a decision.**

3.8.10 The Panel were provided with the "Environmental Group Action Plan". The Group had representation from various Council Departments and the plan measured over 50 actions the Council were taking under the following themes:

- Assess all relevant Hyndburn Borough Council operational buildings for energy efficiency by 2010 and take energy efficiency measures to reduce carbon emissions by 2013.
- Assess all relevant IT operations.
- Reduce vehicle emissions from Hyndburn BC fleet vehicles by 5% by 2010 and 10% by 2013 and Retain Gold Award standard in the Energy Saving Trust's vehicle emissions reduction Motorvate Scheme up to 2011
- Reduce employee business mileage by 10% by April 2011 and by 25% by April 2013.
- Increase the total percentage of employees driving low emission cars (< 140g/km CO₂) obtained through the council's lease and loan schemes to 50% by April 2011 and to 60% by April 2013.
- Increase the percentage of employees travelling to work by alternatives to solo car journeys.
- Improve the environmental impact of the Council's procurement activities by achieving Level 3 of the Flexible Procurement Framework by June 2011.
- Reduce our water consumption.
- Reduce our paper consumption and minimise waste.
- Biodiversity and Land Management.
- Engagement with Councillors, Staff and Partners.

3.8.11 It was noticeable that many of the above points were taken from the Sustainable Communities Strategy or previous Corporate Strategy. The action plan displayed progress on many of the action and went some way to show the Council had done some excellent work to improve our environmental impact. However, it appears as though it has been several years since the

group has met and many of the actions are either complete, no longer relevant or no longer a priority.

3.8.12 The Council created a Travel Plan in 2013. A Travel Plan (TP) is a general term for a package of measures tailored to the needs of individual sites and is aimed at promoting greener, cleaner travel choices and reducing the number of single occupancy car journeys. It involves the development of a set of mechanisms, initiatives and targets that together enable organisations to reduce the impact of their travel and transport on the environment, whilst also bringing a number of other benefits to the organisation as an employer and to staff.

3.8.13 The purpose of this travel plan is to:

- Give employees more choice when considering their commute to work;
- Promote more sustainable travel to work options;
- Help the Council reduce their costs and carbon emissions by encouraging employees to use the most cost effective and sustainable method of transport in the course of their duties.
- Support government policy to manage travel demand more effectively; and
- Promote a healthier, productive workforce.

3.8.14 The plan had many achievements, including reducing fleet vehicle emissions by 25% over four years, reducing business mileage by 45%, increased the percentage of employees driving low emissions cars and increased the number of employees taking part in the cycle to work scheme.

3.8.15 Its been several years since the plan has been updated and the Panel suggested there was an opportunity to update this.

3.8.16 Recommendation: That Cabinet considers updating the Council's Travel Plan.

3.8.17 The Council have operated a successful cycle purchase scheme for many years now, whereby employees can buy a bike and kit (helmet, lights etc) and repay the money via their monthly pay. This saves a little on national insurance payments for HBC and we use the savings to help fund workplace health activities. We don't track how many employees regularly cycle to work, but we are looking at ways to encourage this. We are hoping to provide better, more secure, bike storage this year. We've also purchased four pool bikes to give people an alternative if they're travelling locally, for instance making site visits. Two of the bikes are electric and these were funded by a grant from LCC. The Panel were encouraged by the proactive approach to improving cycling to work options and fully supportive of developments in this area.

3.9 Climate Emergency

- 3.9.1 The 'Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C', published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in October 2018, (a) describes the enormous harm that a 2°C average rise in global temperatures is likely to cause compared with a 1.5°C rise, and (b) confirms that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society and the private sector. The Panel felt that all governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to act, and local governments that recognise this should not wait for their national governments to change their policies.
- 3.9.2 The panel recognises that in November 2018, the UK major cities of Bristol and Manchester both passed motions that declared a 'climate emergency' and set targets aiming to be carbon neutral by 2030 and 2038 respectively. Their decisions have since been echoed by councils across the country, with over 100 councils passing climate emergency motions so far. On 1st May 2019, the UK Parliament followed the lead of these local councils, unanimously approving a non-binding motion to declare a climate emergency and calling on the government to increase its ambition to adopt more ambitious targets for reaching net zero emissions.
- 3.9.3 Declaring a climate emergency for Hyndburn Borough Council and committing to reduce our carbon emissions (or even become carbon neutral) by 2030 is not something that should be considered lightly. Although the panel fully supports the declaration of a climate emergency, it feels that this must be followed by a robust plan on how the Council will achieve its Carbon Reduction target. As the Panel has already experienced, green issues are not currently seen as a priority by many service areas and for this reason, the Panel has had little to no engagement from some departments. To avoid the lack of buy in spilling over into any plans the Council may have as a result of declaring a climate emergency, the panel feels that a new post should be created or adapt existing post(s) to manage the process. The Panel sees this post as leading with support from Service Heads, Councillors and members of the public.
- 3.9.4 **Recommendation: That the panel supported the decision to call a Climate Emergency (Subsequently made at Full Council on the 19th September 2019) and create a new post or adapts the duties of an existing post(s) to facilitate the process of becoming carbon neutral by 2030, and that Cabinet encourages all Service Heads and all Councillors to support the process.**

3.10 Consultation with Prospects Foundation

3.10.1 The Panel made enquiries with several local organisations who we felt could add value to the review. Of those, only Prospects Foundation responded, and consequently sent representatives to a meeting of the panel.

3.10.2 The Prospects Foundation is a company limited by guarantee (03686719), is governed by an elected Management Committee and was formed in December 1998. It became a registered charity (1076541) in July 1999. The Foundation was set up in order to support the existing PROSPECTS Panels. The Foundation became a source of advice and guidance for the Panels, assisting with funding, practical assistance, training and publicity. The PROSPECTS Panels have developed a wide range of environmental and community projects, which have helped make a difference to the residents of Hyndburn.

3.10.3 Prospects administer the Windfall Fund, which is funded via an agreement related to the windfarm in Oswaldtwistle. The Windfall fund has, over 6 years, awarded £481,000 in grants to 61 different groups, delivering 111 environmental projects totalling £3,472,000 in Hyndburn. Of this, £129,000 has been awarded for projects based on 11 HBC council sites and 5 allotment sites.

3.10.4 The Panel were pleased with the level of environmental projects delivered by the fund and the additional money which had matched the grants.

3.10.5 The Panel asked questions relating to Prospects priorities. Prospects would like to develop more partnership work with HBC. This includes the potential for strategic management / expansion of woodland areas owned by the Council or privately owned. The Panel felt there was an opportunity here to improve woodland coverage in Hyndburn and suggested this should be looked into further.

3.10.6 Recommendation: That the Portfolio Holder for Parks and Open Spaces should meet with the Prospects Foundation to discuss the potential for strategic management of woodland areas in Hyndburn.

3.10.7 Prospects also advised the panel on potential questions to ask of Council services including use of pesticides, green investments, efficiency of social housing, local procurement and the upkeep of informal green spaces. The Panel used much of the information gained from Prospects to form its line of questioning of Council Service Areas.

3.10.8 Recommendation: That the Prospects Foundation be thanked for their contribution to the Scrutiny Panel review.

4. Summary and Recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel

4.1 At the outset of the review, the Panel set out an ambitious plan to cover many themes, both internal and external, related to the green agenda. Gathering information was not as easy as was anticipated, and the Panel were disappointed that some departments were unable to engage with the Panel during the review. However, the Panel understands that the Council's workforce has reduced significantly in recent years and recognised other ongoing pressures some departments were facing. Should the Council wish to make environmental issues a priority, the Panel would hope that all departments of the Council would view the environment as part of their core business.

4.2 Many Officers did engage with the process and the panel were appreciative of the time spent attending meetings, researching information and responding to questions.

4.2 The Panel met six times in total over the course of the year. Membership of the panel remained static, with the exception of Councillor Jenny Molineux who stepped down from the panel after she was appointed to Cabinet in May 2019. (The Constitution states that Cabinet Members cannot be a member of a scrutiny panel). At this point Councillor Stephen Button took over as sole chair, having previously co-chaired the panel with Councillor Molineux.

4.3 As part of the Scrutiny process, the full report of the Panel will be submitted to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Who established the panel) for approval prior to submission to Cabinet.

4.4 Due to the number of recommendations in the report, the Panel would not expect instant responses to the recommendations from Cabinet and instead hopes that Cabinet will report back to the Committee with its responses once it has had time to consider the report in full.

4.5 The full list of recommendations of the Panel are as follows:-

- 1. That Cabinet sets ambitious targets and dates of increasing woodland coverage in Hyndburn.**
- 2. That the Council develops an Air Quality Strategy, outlining how it will monitor and aim to improve air pollution in Hyndburn. (To include active monitoring at the Hare & Hounds Junction, Clayton le Moors).**
- 3. That the Council ends the purchase of single use plastic cups. Officers/Councillors should be encouraged to use their own multi use bottles/cups/glasses at the Council's various office water dispensers. Should Cabinet not deem this feasible, there are numerous more**

environmentally friendly single use cups available, including biodegradable and compostable paper cups.

- 4. That the Council switches to fair trade tea, coffee and sugar products and where possible these are sourced from local independent retailers.**
- 5. That the Council adopts a policy of using only the highest grade of recycled paper.**
- 6. Consideration is given to adapting the Capital Programme Application process in order to add a greater weighting to projects which are aimed at saving energy.**
- 7. That the Council should monitor its energy usage on all Council owned buildings and report annually on this to Overview and Scrutiny or another appropriate Committee.**
- 8. That the Council should adopt a policy of procuring only green energy tariffs for its buildings.**
- 9. That the Council considers the introduction of electric Refuse Collection Vehicles from 2021.**
- 10. That the Council should monitor the cost implications of such a switch to determine how feasible this would be as an option for Hyndburn.**
- 11. That the Environmental Services Department be commended for their excellent work in reducing the amount of waste collected.**
- 12. That the Council considers incorporating Sustainable Urban Draining Systems or Grey Water systems when planning relevant major facility works.**
- 13. That the Council continues to monitor the market for environmentally friendly products which could be used for the control of weeds, moss and disease etc.**
- 14. That the Cabinet refreshes the Green Purchasing Guide and Officers are encouraged to use it when procuring. To monitor this, Audits could be carried out on random procurements to establish if and how the green purchasing guidance was referred to.**
- 15. That the Corporate Strategy is updated to include environmental priorities of the Council.**

- 16. That all departments include a minimum of one “green” KPI in their suite of performance indicators, and performance against these indicators is reported annually to Scrutiny.**
- 17. That Cabinet considers adding a section to the report template which highlights the environmental impact of a decision.**
- 18. That Cabinet considers updating the Council’s Travel Plan.**
- 19. That the panel supported the decision to call a Climate Emergency (Made at Full Council on the 19th September 2019) and create a new post or adapts the duties of an existing post(s) to facilitate the process of becoming carbon neutral by 2030, and that Cabinet encourages all Service Heads and all Councillors to support the process.**
- 20. The Portfolio Holder for Parks and Open Spaces should meet with the Prospects Foundation to discuss the potential for strategic management of woodland areas in Hyndburn.**
- 21. That the Prospects Foundation be thanked for their contribution to the Scrutiny Panel review.**

Appendix

A number of comments had been made by Members of the Panel before approval of the final report at the Panel meeting held at 2.30pm on Thursday 24th October 2019.

Some of these comments have been covered by inclusion in the Climate Emergency motion which was submitted to full Council on the 19th September 2019.

Other comments which can be looked at by a future Climate Change, Officer & Member Cross Party Working Group, are as follows:-

3.3.7 Future bids could be made for grants in relation to air quality.

3.4.3 A small sign will be displayed on the water dispenser in Scaitcliffe House to state that once the stock of plastic cups was used, paper cups would only be available.

3.6.6 Could recycling bins be offered for business trade waste and was this something HBC could provide.

3.6.16 HBC should communicate with other local authorities across the North West who have trialled less harmful pesticides and insecticides.

3.7.3 The green purchasing guide required refreshing since first publication in 2010 and should be circulated to key staff and managers.