

1. Introduction and background

Following the launch of the Council's Big Climate Conversation the Third Sector Leadership Group took the decision to base the latest round of Third Sector Goes Local on Climate Emergency and Our Local Community. The session was seen as an ideal platform for organisations to hear from the Council about their target to reach net zero carbon in 2030 and provided an opportunity to hear what local third sector organisations are doing or could do in support of the target.

2. Networking

As 'Goes Local' events are generally attended by smaller community organisations/groups an Icebreaker activity was used to generate conversations: attendees were asked to find alternative uses for a range of recyclable objects on their table, the suggestions ranged from a doormat made from bottle tops to storage containers for a garden shed from takeaway food containers.

3. Presentations

Rob Curtis, Leeds City Council - The Climate Emergency

- Rob spoke about the Big Climate Conversation, a campaign which will help inform the Council's aim to make Leeds a carbon neutral city by 2030. Attendees were encouraged to share the details of the conversation with the people they are working with so that their views are considered. Rob highlighted how the Council is already looking at how they can improve insulation in older houses across Leeds and how they can get ready for changes in transport

Ben Fisher, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew – Grow Wild

- Grow Wild is the outreach initiative of Kew Gardens and aims to connect communities with nature. Ben outlined some of the Grow Wild projects that have happened across the country and illustrated how involvement in these projects has had a positive impact on those taking part; improving health and wellbeing and reducing social isolation. It has also led to people reporting a greater sense of pride in where they live and the motivation to maintain and improve their environment.

4. Group discussions and key findings

Following the presentations, attendees were asked to consider how organisations within the third sector can help meet the climate and sustainability challenge in their local area, specifically: what changes need to happen in their neighbourhood and what changes should the city prioritise. From the discussion a number of key findings emerged:

- **Environment Policy**
A number of organisations present either did not have an environmental policy or their current policy needed to be reviewed. They felt it would be useful to access templates outlining what should be included in their policies.
- **Practical support**

There was recognition from attendees that they needed to do things differently but due to the scale of the challenge they often didn't know where to begin. The attendees said they would welcome access to information to help them do this, including 'how to guides' and the sharing of best practice from others. They also felt it would be useful to be kept informed of the council priorities following the Big Climate Conversation.

- **Buildings**

Attendees suggested that a number of small projects do not have access to venues to deliver their service whilst some organisations have space that is not being utilised. Are there smarter ways of working? Could organisations share buildings? Linked to this attendees present talked about maximising use of their buildings hiring out rooms when the building is not fully occupied, with the additional benefit of generating income, and offering space for hot desking. Attendees suggested that organisations could offer more flexibility to staff working patterns, an example of the Council encouraging staff to work from home at least one day per week was discussed. There was however recognition that in order to achieve this there would need to be an investment in infrastructure to enhance remote connections to homes.

- **Transport**

Attendees discussed incentives from organisations for staff using public transport rather than their own cars for work, however all agreed that a more effective public transport system is needed to ensure people can be confident that they will arrive on time and without stress. Although some people cycle to work others did not feel confident to cycle across the city. Attendees talked about improved use of 'grey transport' (using their personal cars) and ways of promoting car sharing to meetings - the example of three cars being driven to this event from one organisation was highlighted.

- **Festivals/Events**

Attendees referenced the number of events that take place in the city throughout the year and the amount of plastic waste this generates, a suggestion for creating something that people could buy when they attend their first festival of the year that could be used at future events was made. Although some charities acquire tents following Leeds Festival there are large numbers that are not recycled, attendees asked if there are alternative ways to recycle?

5. Recommendations

- TSL to act as the conduit for sharing further information regarding the results of the Big Climate Conversation and any associated developments.
- TSL to produce examples of model Environmental policies that organisations can access.
- TSL to promote the Doing Good Leeds website to organisations as a means of sharing examples of how they are reducing their carbon footprint.
- TSL to produce 'How to guides' for organisations as a means of sharing examples of good practice across the sector.