

LOCAL ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE COMMITTEE
held MONDAY 17 AUGUST 2026 at
GREENWOOD ROOM, HEBDEN BRIDGE TOWN HALL

PRESENT

Councillors Guilfoyle, Macdonald, Parry, Turner and Woodhead

Deputy Clerk Ebony Andrews

HRTC Officer Gareth Muir

ABSENT

Councillors Trickett

MINUTES

26(LE)198	1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & REASONS Apologies were received from Cllrs Trickett – on holiday,
26(LE)199	2. MEMBERS INTERESTS RELATING TO AGENDA ITEMS There were no members interests reported at this meeting.
26(LE)200	3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 9 JUNE 2026 Cllr Parry asked for clarification on point 8a). regarding the lease of a HRTC van for Council business, and asked if the committee had explored electric vehicle options. The committee confirmed they have, and that an EV option remains the ambition of the committee, as and when the reliable infrastructure to support it is in place. RESOLVED: To note the information.
26(LE)201	4. PRIORITIES FOR THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE COMMITTEE The committee considered the priorities of the Local Environment & Climate Committee and the budget requirements for the 2027-28 budget, and the three-year forecast to 2031. The Chair introduced the priority-setting discussion by referring

to the Committee's Terms of Reference as a starting point. It was emphasised that the session was to establish the Committee's overall direction of travel and priorities, rather than to agree on detailed plans or specific actions.

The Deputy Clerk noted the recent amendment to the Terms of Reference to include a more detailed consideration of the environmental impact of the Council's own internal functions and services – and that this may be an area meriting further consideration as part of the discussion. This give rise to the use of paper in the Council.

Use of Resources – Paper

Cllr Woodhead, supported by Cllr Macdonald, raised the Council's use of paper. It was suggested that alternatives should be explored to reduce paper use while ensuring that accessibility requirements continued to be met for Cllrs. Eg. the use of digital devices for Council papers was discussed, alongside the idea of surveying councillors to understand any specific requirements and gauge support for the idea. The general aspiration of the Council should be move towards paper being available where required, rather than being the default.

The potential use of digital or remote meetings was briefly discussed, although it was noted that Council meetings will continue to take place in person. Given the local nature of the Council and its members, travel to meetings was unlikely to represent a significant proportion of the Council's environmental / carbon footprint.

Cllr Macdonald highlighted that should paper-less systems be adopted, there is a need to ensure that good governance and appropriate record keeping are maintained. It was suggested that advice could be sought from YLCA as a starting point, and that the Council could also learn from approaches adopted by other Councils.

Climate Change

Climate change and the Council's wider environmental work were then discussed. Cllr Macdonald noted that through existing projects including High Hirst Woodmeadow, support for Brearley Fields, the Hebden Royd Green Network and HRTC Allotment

projects, the Council is already undertaking a substantial amount of work within its local remit and sphere of influence. It was agreed that this work should continue, although opportunities to maximise local impact should also be identified and be explored.

The Local Environment & Allotments Officer reflected that much of their work in recent months has been laying the foundations for longer-term benefits, strengthening communities by building environmental resilience. It was agreed that the Council should avoid duplicating work already being undertaken by others, while considering how it can evolve from directly providing or facilitating activities towards supporting greater community ownership and autonomy in the longer-term.

High Hirst Woodmeadow was highlighted as a strong example of what could be achieved elsewhere with support. It was suggested that the project had the potential to act as a model for similar work elsewhere, with opportunities for skills sharing and wider learning.

Parks & Playparks

Cllr Guilfoyle raised Calderdale's Parks and playparks, noting the importance of Calder Holmes Park as a 'destination park' and meeting place for a wide range of visitors. Concerns were raised about the condition of the play area, coupled with the reduced funding available from Calderdale Council for improvements.

The installation of an accessible swing, alongside improvements to the skatepark and graffiti boards were identified. It was recognised that these were ongoing issues which could require future investment and therefore ongoing budget.

Cllr Macdonald suggested that opportunities for partnership working and collective funding could be explored in relation to parks and other, larger infrastructure projects. Play equipment is expensive, and it was suggested that working with other organisations could help bring additional funding and support to areas that ultimately sit under CMBC but now require investment beyond Calderdale's budget allocation for these types of facilities. It was mentioned that The Rotary Club of Hebden Bridge had expressed an interest in supporting projects related to Calder Holmes Park.

Reflecting on what's working

The Committee reflected on the importance of reviewing its existing activities and being prepared to cease, change or develop projects where they are no longer delivering the greatest benefit. Examples were discussed including changes to the bulb planting programme and the Spring Clean approach, with current activity being developed to better align with environmental outcomes.

Opportunities to support wildflower planting and involve young people, children and schools were also noted. It was agreed that existing activities should continue to be reviewed to ensure that they remained fit for purpose.

The Committee discussed reducing, and where possible eliminating, the use of single-use plastics at Council events. This point to be relayed to the Projects & Events Committee.

Large infrastructure projects and community representation

The proposed Calderdale Energy Park (CEP) windfarm and Flood Alleviation works were discussed. It was agreed that the Council should continue to take positions that reflect the community's mandate and expectations, recognising the importance of HRTC in being a voice for local people and representing local views on significant projects affecting the locality.

Concerning, the forthcoming Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS), while HRTC is already represented on the stakeholder working group, it was felt that there could be a more structured line of communication between this Committee and those representative(s). This would help ensure committee ideas, knowledge and priorities were fed into discussions around the detailed design and delivery of works, including the reinstatement or provision of public facilities such as benches and flower beds following works (for example). It was suggested that the FAS could become a regular agenda item for the Committee going forward.

Communications

Cllr Turner noted the range of positive local environment projects already taking place, highlighting the importance of continuing to promote and communicate this activity to the community. It was suggested that communications could form a regular agenda item, helping the Committee to share stories, celebrate successes and raise awareness upcoming projects and activities.

Flooding support – Drain clearances

Cllrs Macdonald and Woodhead, drawing on experience as Flood Wardens, raised issues relating to clearing blocked drains. The potential for an 'adopt a drain' approach was discussed, although it was recognised that such schemes have mixed success and that different types of drains present different challenges, and this can be a lot to ask of residents. Calderdale Council retains overall responsibility for drains and anecdotally responds to reports of blockages, although there is wide recognition that this is hard work and that CMBC capacity will be limited at critical times.

The Committee discussed whether value could be added by taking a more coordinated approach to identifying and monitoring problem drain areas, potentially working with Flood Wardens and / or other local groups. Understanding whether Calderdale Council holds information on drain locations / a drain map could help identify priority areas. Inviting Flood Wardens to participate in the Hebden Royd Green Network was also recommended.

Collective community composting

Cllr Parry raised the idea of communal composting, using the ideas of a shared compost bin similar to one operating on his own street as an example. The Council could support shared composting initiatives, helping to reduce the volume of green waste while providing benefits to gardening and planting.

HRTC & Officer capacity

Cllr Woodhead emphasised the importance of remaining realistic about the capacity of officers and councillors and not spreading efforts too thinly. The Committee should continue with the work on what is already proving successful, while allowing more recently instituted initiatives to develop and deliver community benefits. Carefully considering future opportunities without

	overextending resources is key. Along these lines, thanks were extended to the Local Environment & Allotments Officer for their work. The Local Environment & Allotments Officer provided an overview of more specific current projects, such as hanging baskets, volunteering days, the Hebden Rod Green Network and conservation grazing. Activities including the bat and dawn chorus walks along with moth and bee monitoring were mentioned among others. Cllr Guilfoyle noted improvements in the Council's communications and a sense that news on HRTC local environment work is reaching wider into the community. Thanks were extended to the Communications Officer for their work in this area. RESOLVED: These Minutes will be considered at the next Strategy & Review Committee Meeting and will feed into discussion around the wider priority setting for the Town Council going forward.
26(LE)202	5. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC There was no resolution to exclude members of the public and press under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 during consideration of items of a confidential nature.

Meeting finished at 8:52pm.