

# **Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 27 May 2021**

**Present:** Councillor Igbon (Chair) – in the Chair

**Councillors:** Appleby, Butt, Flanagan, Foley, Hassan, Holt, Jeavons, Lynch, Razaq, Sadler, Shilton Godwin and Wright

**Apologies:** Councillor Chohan, Hughes and Lyons

**Also present:**

Councillor Rawlins, Executive Member for Environment

Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

Jonny Sadler, Deputy Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency

Tom Flanagan, Interim Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency

Mike Wilton, Chair of the Climate Change Partnership

### **ECCSC/21/1 Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-25: latest progress and priorities 2021/22+**

The Committee considered the report and accompanying presentation of the Chair, Manchester Climate Change Partnership and the Deputy Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency that provided an overview of progress against the Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-25 and priorities for 2021/22+.

The main points and themes within the report included: -

- Providing an introduction and background to the Our Manchester Strategy, the Manchester Climate Change Partnership and the Manchester Climate Change Agency;
- An overview of the Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-25 and its four headline objectives and six priority areas for action;
- An overview of citywide progress 2019/20, noting that the latest report was published in July 2020;
- Providing an overview of the Partnership and Agency Progress Summary 2020/21; and
- Describing the various Partnership and Agency Priorities 2021/22+.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were: -

- Regular progress reports were required to enable the Committee to scrutinise progress against the ambitions to reduce emissions;
- Need to discuss climate change in the context of social justice and ensure that all communications supported the climate change agenda;
- Any communication strategy needed to be appropriate to maximise its reach and influence to all the diverse communities in Manchester;

- The need to articulate the urgency of this issue and that immediate action was required;
- Communities and young people needed to be supported to mobilise and take appropriate actions to tackle climate change;
- The importance of engaging with all communities and stakeholders on this important issue so that a collective response could be delivered;
- The need for the Council to use all levers and spheres of influence to prioritise climate change, including planning policy and enforcement;
- All information that was available to the public, including that available on the Council's website needed to be reviewed regularly to ensure it was accurate and current;
- Education and engagement with young people on the issue of climate change was key; and
- To recognise the need for meaningful and appropriate engagement with residents and communities, noting that those experiencing economic hardships might not prioritise climate change and the options and choices available to them could be limited.

In response to the comments raised by the Committee, the Deputy Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency advised that regular progress reports could be submitted for consideration, subject to the availability of data. However, he stated that as the team was relatively small there was a need to ensure the correct balance was drawn to ensure that they continued to deliver and progress actions. The Chair of the Climate Change Partnership stated that bimonthly RAG rating reports were produced against identified actions and these could be shared with the Committee for information. The Committee welcomed this suggestion.

The Chair of the Climate Change Partnership further commented that the focus on 2025 as a target date ensured that this remained an immediate issue and kept a focus on this important agenda.

The Deputy Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency, stated that he welcomed the role of scrutiny and commented that it provided an opportunity to engage with Members and encouraged them to use their existing knowledge of community groups and networks to drive and support activities and initiatives around this agenda. He further stated that he acknowledged and agreed with all of the comments made regarding communications. He further commented that he acknowledged the comments raised regarding the link between climate change and social justice, stating that work around this issue would be progressed.

The Deputy Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency, stated that the partnership model that had been developed in Manchester was recognised as good practice both nationally and internationally, in particular, he advised, the work to support the Manchester Climate Change Youth Board, whose Manifesto was to be launched in June 2021.

He stated that this partnership approach allowed for honest and constructive challenge to develop and articulate a collective response with a shared responsibility across the city.

The Strategic Director Neighbourhoods stated that it was important to recognise that it was a shared, partnership responsibility to deliver the climate change agenda, noting that the Council was one of many partners and the Council was responsible for less than 4% of the city's overall direct emissions. She commented that the investment had been made in Climate Change Officers, whose role would be to support the local Neighbourhood Teams with climate change activities.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods further commented that the Neighbourhood Teams, in consultation with the local Members and Neighbourhood Managers, were encouraged to develop Ward Climate Change Plans.

The Chair of the Climate Change Partnership commented that work was always underway to engage and expand the partnership, stating that Age Friendly Manchester were currently in discussions to join. He reiterated the point that it was not the role of one organisation to tackle climate change, but rather a collective responsibility.

The Deputy Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency, acknowledged the comments made regarding the challenges when engaging with residents and he made reference to the Zero Carbon Communities Programme that was being piloted across six communities to deliver and support climate change activities. He added that this work would be a key feature of the 2.0 Framework Consultation and he would welcome all Members' input into that consultation to understand further the barriers experienced. He further commented that planning policy could be used to influence climate change and he made reference to a recent scheme to manage water that had been delivered in West Gorton as a good example.

The Chair thanked the invited guests for attending the meeting and delivering their presentation. She stated that it was everyone's personal responsibility to take action to tackle climate change and she paid tribute to the officers working in partnership in her ward to support and encourage her local community on this important issue. She stated that this and similar examples of good practice should be shared across all wards.

## **Decisions**

The Committee recommend;

1. That all relevant information and data is shared with the Committee at the appropriate time, including the Climate Change Partnership bimonthly RAG rating against actions;
2. That information relating to good practice and climate change is shared across all Neighbourhood Teams; and
3. That the Chair discuss with the Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee the options for ensuring that climate change and young people was adequately addressed through the scrutiny process.

## **ECCSC/21/2 Overview Report**

The report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which contained key decisions within the Committee's remit and responses to previous recommendations was submitted for comment. Members were also invited to agree the Committee's future work programme.

The Committee noted that it would be discussing the work programme for the forthcoming municipal year in further detail in a private session following the meeting, and that an updated work programme reflecting this discussion would be circulated as normal in the papers for the next meeting.

### **Decision**

The Committee note the report.

### **ECCSC/21/3 Exclusion on Press and Public**

### **Decision**

To exclude the public during consideration of the following item which involved consideration of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of particular persons and public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

### **ECCSC/21/4 Scrutiny Committees' work on cross-cutting themes of the Our Manchester Strategy**

The Committee considered the report of Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that provided an overview of how cross-cutting themes in the *Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025* reset document were covered by MCC Scrutiny Committees during the 2021/22 municipal year.

*Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025* had reset Manchester's priorities for the next five years to ensure we could achieve the city's ambitions set out in the *Our Manchester Strategy 2016 – 2025*.

### **Decision**

The Committee note the report.