

Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 23 June 2022

Present:

Councillor Shilton Godwin – in the Chair

Councillors Chohan, Doswell, Holt, Hughes, Ilyas, Lyons, Nunney, Razaq, Sheikh and Wright

Apologies: Councillor Jeavons

Also present:

Councillor Rawlins, Executive Member for Environment and Transport

Councillor Foley, Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Transport

ECCSC/22/51 Urgent Business - Clean Air Plan Policy Review

The Chair introduced an item of urgent business by explaining that the report entitled 'Clean Air Plan Policy Review' had been listed for consideration at this meeting. She advised the Committee that this item had been deferred to the July meeting and invited the Executive Member for Environment and Transport and the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer to outline the reasons for this.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer informed the Committee that the draft response to the Government was not currently available for scrutiny, however this would be presented to the Committee at the July meeting prior to its submission to the Executive. She stated this approach was being adopted across all the ten districts within Greater Manchester. She said that in order to meet the Government deadline of 1 July and enable the individual local authorities to consider it before a final version was submitted, the GM Air Quality Administration Committee, with political representation from each district, had agreed to submit a draft plan to meet the deadline but be clear that it remained a draft until it has been considered by the districts.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport further commented that as soon as the papers were available for the Greater Manchester Air Quality Administration Committee, she would direct Members to these links.

Decision

The Committee noted the update.

ECCSC/22/52 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2022 as a correct record.

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that provided an update on the actions to be progressed in Year 3 of the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) 2020-25.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- The achievements and highlights of Year 2 will be detailed in the Annual Report 2021-22 which will be published in the Autumn of 2022 and will be available on the Council's website;
- Describing that a refresh of the CCAP 2020-25 was currently underway and would be completed in Autumn 2022;
- The refresh would align the CCAP to wider strategies, such as the Local Plan;
- Reiterating that the Council remained committed to maintaining transparency and would continue to publish quarterly progress reports on the Council's website; and
- Providing a description of the actions and priorities against five workstreams.

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

- Welcoming the report and the information provided;
- Reiterating the call made previously by the Committee for an end to the use of Glyphosate as a method of weed control across the city;
- The report did not present any SMART targets for the activities described;
- The need to clearly articulate the progress made to reduce carbon emissions so this was accessible and relevant to residents;
- An update was sought in relation to Carbon Literacy Training;
- The need to meaningfully engage with the Manchester Community Assembly on Climate Change;
- What support was offered by the Council to the Climate Change Partnership; and
- The issue of shading and heat stress across the public realm needed to be included in Workstream 4: Climate Adaptation and Carbon Sequestration. Noting the emerging evidence in relation to the 'heat island' effect of cities and the impact this had on individuals and the wider contribution to the heating of the planet.

In response the Executive Member for Environment and Transport advised the Committee that the policy in relation to the use of Glyphosate would be circulated to all Members for information. She advised that the Council was committed to reducing the use of this and that alternative methods of weed control across different settings were being considered. She noted that the Committee would be receiving a report on this issue at a future meeting. She advised that residents could opt out of having this used in a neighbourhood, on the condition that they would then take responsibility for removing the weeds themselves. She further advised that she would relay the comments from the meeting to Councillor Igbon, Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods.

The Zero Carbon Manager advised that the Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan was the Council's detailed plan and contained targets and deadlines agreed against actions. The Strategic Lead, Resources & Programmes added that

this report provided an overview of the coming year's priorities and had previously been requested by the Committee, however he noted the way this report and information provided to future meetings would be reviewed, noting the comments from Members. He further stated that the information that was published on the Council's website would be reviewed to ensure that it was appropriate for both Members and residents to access information in relation to the range of actions and activities undertaken by the Council to address climate change.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport advised that both herself and the team remained committed to arranging any briefing sessions or training for Members of the Committee on the activities and work to tackle climate change.

The Strategic Lead, Resources & Programmes informed the Committee that they did engage in continued dialogue with the Community Assembly on Climate Change. Further, he informed the Members that the Council was an active partner, along with the Universities and Bruntwood in the Oxford Road Corridor Partnership. He further commented that these established links with the local Universities facilitated the understanding and implementation of new innovations and understandings to address climate change.

The Strategic Lead, Resources & Programmes advised that he would relay the comments regarding heat stress and the public realm to colleagues in the planning department. The Head of City Policy advised that as part of the Local Plan, consideration was being given to developing policies to deliver zero carbon new build.

The Principal Resources & Programmes Officer informed the Committee that to date 1,400 staff and 54 Councillors were certified as having completed the Carbon Literacy Training. She advised that this training was now mandatory for staff. She further stated that the ambition was for the Council to achieve Gold standard accreditation for this activity, and a dedicated resource had been allocated to deliver this ambition.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer advised that the Committee would be considering the Climate Change Action Plan 2020/25 Refresh at the September meeting and consideration would be given to resilience and adaptation as part of this reporting. She reiterated the commitment that addressing climate change was embedded across all Council decision making.

Decision

To note the report.

ECCSC/22/54 Carbon Reduction Procurement Progress Report

The Committee considered the report of Strategic Lead Integrated Commissioning and Head of Integrated Commissioning and Procurement that updated the Members on the steps that had been taken within the council's procurements to support carbon reduction and highlighted planned next steps.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background, noting that as part of the Climate Change Action Plan, the council was working to reduce the emissions associated with the goods, services and works contracts that the council procured;
- In March 2021, the council added a new 10% evaluation weighting specifically in relation to climate change and the environment as part of the Social Value element of contracts;
- Examples of how this weighting had been applied and the outcomes achieved;
- Providing a summary of the main practical challenges and issues that were having to be addressed; and
- Appended to the report was the Internal Audit Briefing Note that provided a high level overview of the current arrangements in place to support carbon reduction through sustainable procurement.

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

- Welcoming the report and the progress to date, noting that this was an important area of activity for the Council;
- Welcoming the Internal Audit Briefing Note, noting that it was important to engage a 'critical friend' to provide an opinion on this important activity;
- Noting that environmental commitments related to wider activities, in addition to reducing carbon emissions;
- What was being done to support SMEs (Small and medium-sized enterprises), noting that many of these were committed to people and place;
- What monitoring was undertaken to ensure that contractors awarded adhered to delivery on their environmental commitments;
- Were the Questions and Answers used in the awarding of contracts available for the public to access;
- Mindful of commercial sensitivity, anonymised case studies should be included in future update reports;
- Had all the staff involved in the procurement process completed the Carbon Literacy training, noting the extremely high level of technical and innovative information that commissioning officers would need to assess;
- Directing officers to the Competition and Markets Authority 'Green claims code: making environmental claims' guidance as a useful resource; and
- Noting that to avoid accusations of greenwashing, carbon off setting should be deterred.

In response the Head of Integrated Commissioning and Procurement stated that the 10% weighting was for the value of the total valuation score, noting that currently Manchester was pioneering this approach. He stated that the monitoring of the delivery of this by successful contractors was undertaken as part of the ongoing contract management arrangements over the life of the contract, and this was to be standardised across all departments within the Council. The Committee were advised that with the exception of very new staff, all staff involved in the procurement process were Carbon Literacy trained. He further added that work was currently underway to capture and centralise the recording of all data on this activity.

The Head of Integrated Commissioning and Procurement advised that discussions regarding the 10% evaluation weighting in relation to climate change were had with various department Strategic Leads when contract specifications were brought forward prior to tender, noting that there was an escalation process to the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer if required.

The Strategic Lead Integrated Commissioning stated that wider environmental benefits, such as delivering green space and supporting biodiversity were considered and assessed, noting that the additional 20% minimum Social Value element of contracts could also be used to support such initiatives. However, the requirement to address carbon emissions was explicit in the tender process as this supported and mirrored the ambitions for the city. He added that carbon offsetting was not promoted and actively discouraged; however, he acknowledged there would be circumstances when this would be used, adding that if this was done it needed to benefit the city.

The Strategic Lead Integrated Commissioning advised that the Growth Company and the Council's Work and Skills Team had established links and support to local SMEs. The Head of Integrated Commissioning and Procurement further added that advice and constructive feedback was also provided to all unsuccessful bidders as to how they could improve any future applications.

The Strategic Lead Integrated Commissioning advised that there was an online toolkit where the type of questions asked could be viewed and this resource also provided a useful narrative for prospective applicants. Noting that bids were commercially sensitive, consideration would be given to providing anonymised examples in future update reports, commenting that there was evidence that suppliers were actively engaging in this programme as carbon reduction plans had been submitted as part of the tender process. He further added that as this work progressed the examples could be used to inform and educate the market so as to embed this understanding and approach.

Both officers described the learning and sharing of good practice from the Manchester experience that was shared across a range of local and national forums, including Greater Manchester procurement colleagues, other Core Cities and the Local Government Association. Officers further acknowledged the comment regarding the Competition and Markets Authority 'Green claims code: making environmental claims' guidance.

The Chair concluded this item by acknowledging the achievements to date and recognising the importance of this activity not only for the city but also the world. She advised that the Committee would request an update report at an appropriate time.

Decision

To note the report and request that an update report is provided for consideration at an appropriate time.

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.

Members requested that an update be provided for the next meeting for the listed outstanding recommendations. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer stated she would take this away as an action.

The Chair advised the Committee that she would be attending the July meeting of Economy Scrutiny Committee for the item on Active Travel. She stated that if any Members of this Committee had any questions relating to that item that they would like to raise at that meeting to contact her, and she would raise these on behalf of the Committee.

Decision

The Committee notes the report and agrees the work programme, noting the requests for update reports arising from consideration of the previous agenda items.