

Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 8 December 2022

Present:

Councillor Shilton Godwin – in the Chair

Councillors Chohan, Hughes, Ilyas, Lyons, Nunney, Razaq and Wright

Apologies: Councillor Doswell and Holt

Also present:

Councillor Foley, Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Transport

ECCSC/22/79 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2022 as a correct record.

ECCSC/22/80 Local Area Energy Plan - Progress Update

The Committee considered the report of Strategic Director, Growth and Development that described that Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) was the first city region in the country to compile and complete Local Area Energy Plans (LAEP) from street to network level. The GM LAEP was adopted by GMCA in September 2022. This report provides an overview of the city's LAEP and how this would be used to meet our target to be a zero carbon city region by 2038.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background;
- Describing identified main issues; and
- Describing ongoing work and next steps.

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

- Noting the challenge of domestic boilers being ready to use hydrogen fuel;
- The challenges to retrofitting presented by heritage buildings and what could be done to support residents;
- What support was available more generally to support local residents in regard to delivering sustainable energy solutions;
- Noting the prevalence of pre-1914 homes across Manchester and these being reported as dwellings that were most consistently identified as needing fabric retrofit to support decarbonisation;
- Noting that there were a significant number of properties that were still single glazed.

In response to the Committees deliberations the Strategic Lead, Resources & Programmes advised that residents could access the GMCA Your Home, Better website as a source of information and support available. Your Home, Better is an independent service delivered by retrofit experts, providing advice, planning and delivery to help reduce the costs of your bills as well as carbon emissions associated with home energy and heating. He acknowledged the specific comment regarding the challenges and associated costs of retrofitting heritage buildings.

The Strategic Lead, Resources & Programmes further commented that currently there was a national issue in the supply of hydrogen domestic boilers, noting that currently there was no demand for these.

The Strategic Director Development stated that the Council was taking a civic leadership role on the issue of LAEP, and this was aligned to the Climate Change Action Plan. She stated that future reports to the Committee would include an agreed action plan.

The Interim Head of Infrastructure and Environment noted the comments regarding pre 1914 housing stock across the city. He stated that this understanding helped inform the modelling and articulating the scale of investment required to adequately deliver the scale of retrofitting. He further noted that replacing single glazing would significantly reduce heat loss and improve energy efficiency.

Decision

1. The Committee note the report.
2. Recommend that an update report is submitted for consideration in the new municipal year.

ECCSC/22/81 Draft Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy

The Committee considered the report of Strategic Director (Growth and Development) that provided an overview of the draft Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background;
- Consideration of the main issues associated with the strategy; and
- Providing the draft Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy for comment.

The Committee had been invited to comment on the report prior to it being considered by the Executive.

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

- Noting the challenge and increased costs experienced by leaseholders wishing to install Electrical Vehicle Chargers, and what support could the Council offer tenants in negotiations with their landlords and property owners;

- How would Electric Vehicle Charging Points be distributed across the city; and
- How did this strategy complement other strategies, noting that the ambition was to improve public transport, improve options for active travel and thus reduce the dependency on cars.

The Strategic Director (Growth & Development) advised that the strategy described the role of the Council. The strategy recognised that this area of work would be led primarily by the market, and would respond to demand.

The Interim Head of Infrastructure and Environment acknowledged that there was a need to introduce more electric vehicle charging facilities, hence the production of the strategy. He further advised that the installation of domestic charging points was primarily currently for those with the funds and ability (i.e having a driveway) to do so, adding that the Council had limited ability to intervene between a tenant and a landlord on this issue.

The Senior Policy Officer stated that this strategy would be reviewed in recognition of the speed of which technology developed. She said that these initial proposals were for the Council to consider the best use of their estates and facilities to deliver charging points, noting that grid capacity would also have to be taken into consideration. She said that the use of Council facilities would supplement wider provision by the market. She further commented that any new developments were now required through planning conditions to ensure electric vehicle charging points were installed.

The Interim Head of Infrastructure and Environment stated that the GM 2040 Transport Strategy had committed to 50% of all journeys being undertaken by public transport and active travel, and anticipated an increase in the use of electric vehicles. He said that as demand developed, the location of electric vehicle charging facilities across the city would remain under review.

The Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Transport reiterated the importance of delivering an integrated sustainable transport strategy, adding that reliable alternatives would reduce dependency on cars. She stated that this also needed to be considered in the context of climate and health justice, noting the significant issue of air quality and health implications, particularly for children across the city.

In considering this item the Chair reiterated the need to consider this topic in conjunction with the strategies to improve active travel and improve connected public transport across all areas of the city.

Decision

1. The Committee recommend that an additional principle be included in the list of Principles listed at page 15 of the Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy. To read as 'Electric Vehicle charge points should be readily available and accessible to residents wherever they live in the city.'

2. The Committee recommend that the Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy be considered in conjunction with emerging policy and strategy on public transport and active travel.

3. The Committee recommend that the Executive approve and endorse the Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, noting the above recommendation.

ECCSC/22/82 Single Use Plastics

The Committee considered the report of Head of Integrated Commissioning and Procurement; Strategic Lead, Resources and Programmes and the Sustainability Project Manager, Zero Carbon that provided an update on work being undertaken across the Council on Single Use Plastics as part of the action under Workstream 3 of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction, noting that in 2019 Manchester City Council had pledged to eradicate avoidable Single Use Plastics (SUPs) by 2024;
- All ten Greater Manchester local authorities, plus the Greater Manchester Combined Authority had committed to actions related to reducing SUPs including aiming to eradicate avoidable single use plastic;
- Describing the Council's commitments as stated within the refreshed Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25;
- Progress to date; and
- Next steps.

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

- What approach was taken to SUPs at markets, noting the success of the Christmas markets;
- Noting that for specific health conditions it was necessary to use a straw;
- How were avoidable and unavoidable plastics assessed; and
- What was the approach taken to the various supply chains via the Council's procurement process on the issue of SUPs.

The Sustainability Project Manager responded by advising that SUP food and drink serveware and bags had been banned on the Manchester Christmas markets since 2019, and this was routinely checked by officers. She further noted the comment regarding access to drinking straws for those with specific health conditions and advised that information on this would be provided to the Member following the meeting. She further advised that the Zero Carbon Team would continue to support the key messaging and enforcement surrounding SUPs, which will reflect the outcome of most recent Government consultation on a potential further ban on SUP items when known. She said they were committed to working with different teams and external partners on education and engagement on SUPs, including the Events Team to support them, adding that they produced written guidance in the form of a range of Sustainable Events Guides, including a specific guide on reusable cups and shared examples of good practice

In response to the question raised regarding the distinction between avoidable and unavoidable plastics she advised that the approach was to understand what was in use; categorise the item as avoidable or unavoidable by 2024 through consideration of alternatives, including production and waste stream consequences. She also clarified that the categorisation of SUPs would be completed as part of action planning process within the next six months, so that avoidable SUPs could be eradicated by end of 2024 and a plan in place for unavoidable SUPs beyond 2024.

The Head of Integrated Commissioning and Procurement advised that the Council had introduced a 10% evaluation weighting in procurements relating to climate change and the environment. He said that written guidance in relation to this was provided to contractors, noting that the questions asked of suppliers needed to be relevant to the specific nature of the contract. He advised he could provide written examples of questions asked regarding SUPs to the Chair to use in response to a resident's query.

The Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Transport called for the increased awareness amongst the population on the issue of SUPs. In response to a specific issue raised regarding the licensing regime, the Chair suggested that she should pursue this in her capacity as a Deputy Executive Member.

Decision

To note the report.

ECCSC/22/83 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 Chair advised the Committee that the need to maximise revenue to the Council from commercial events that were delivered in Manchester parks that arose when discussing the Budget report at the November meeting would be considered by the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee.

A Member recommended that an oral report be received at the January 2023 meeting that provides an update on the waste collection service during the Christmas period. The Committee endorsed this recommendation.

Decision

The Committee notes the report and agrees the work programme, noting the above amendment.