

Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 25 May 2023

Present:

Councillor Shilton Godwin – in the Chair
Councillors Chohan, Collins, Doswell, Holt, Ilyas, McCaul and Wiest

Apologies: Councillors Razaq and Wright

Also present:

Councillor Rawlins, Executive Member for Environment and Transport
Councillor Foley, Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Transport
Councillor Igbon, Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods
Samantha Nicholson, Director of Manchester Climate Change Agency
Michael Wilton, Chair of Manchester Climate Change Partnership

ECCNSC/23/29 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 9 March 2023 as a correct record.

To note the minutes of the meeting of the Climate Change Ward Action Plans Task and Finish Group held 23 March 2023.

ECCNSC/23/30 Manchester Climate Change Framework (2022 Update) - Progress Report

The Committee considered the report of Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency (MCCA) and the Chair, Manchester Climate Change Partnership (MCCP) that provided an overview of progress being made to deliver the recommended actions in the 2022 Update to Manchester's Climate Change Framework (2020-25) which was published in October 2022.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Describing some of the positive actions that had been launched or delivered across the city since October 2022;
- Describing the progress being made to map activity against the recommended actions put forward by the 2022 Update; and
- Discussion of the challenges with capturing and collating robust and meaningful data on climate change activity and emissions reductions.

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

- Welcoming the information that described that the MCCA and MCCP had secured an A List rating for Manchester from CDP. Noting that this positioned the city as one of only 122 global cities that met the highest standard of leadership and transparency on environmental action and data disclosure. Only 12% of cities that were scored received this rating;
- Asking how optimistic the Partnership was since the update to the Framework six months ago;
- What would the impact of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme be;
- Welcoming the information regarding the Manchester Climate Pack and the 'story pack' adding that this should be shared with NHS partners across the city so as to avoid any crisis in the event of a period of extreme weather;
- Further information was sought as to the anticipated impact of the Greater Manchester Trailblazer Devolution Deal, published March 2023;
- Commenting that this Trailblazer Devolution Deal should be used to maximise all opportunities, including green skills; and
- The Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Strategy needed to be inclusive across the city.

The Chair of Manchester Climate Change Partnership provided the Members with a description of the Partnership, commenting that there was a positive range of activity across the partners to address climate change. He advised that membership of the Partnership was expanding, and the work had accelerated which was a very positive development. He commented that the A List rating was very positive for the city, however he commented that currently the city was not on target to remain within its carbon budget, and the message remained that more needed to be done. He stated that more support was required from government on this agenda, in particular to the issue of domestic retrofitting.

In response to comments raised regarding the Airport, the Chair of Manchester Climate Change Partnership stated that Manchester Airport Group (MAG) were members of the Partnership, and a specific subgroup had been established to consider this area of activity. He described that as an operator MAG had a good operating model in terms of carbon emissions and had led nationally on the discussions regarding the issue of alternative, sustainable aviation fuel. He further acknowledged that social change and climate justice was linked to climate change and made reference to the conversation that was ongoing regarding the use of aviation in these terms.

The Director of Manchester Climate Change Agency commented that the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme was welcomed, however it was not at the scale required. She commented that information was shared with NHS partners across the city and the wider Greater Manchester Integrated Care system. With regard to the Trailblazer Devolution Deal she advised that following finalisation of these arrangements a programme of detailed planning and actions would be undertaken, adding that this would include consideration of the issue of skills. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer informed the Members that the Greater Manchester Trailblazer Devolution Deal would not prevent Manchester from applying for future funding streams as and when they became available, and that work would be undertaken with Greater Manchester Combined Authority to maximise the outcomes of the Trailblazer Devolution Deal.

The Director of Manchester Climate Change Agency responded to the number of actions listed in the Updated Framework and advised that the actions were owned by the various stakeholders. The Chair of Manchester Climate Change Partnership added that stakeholders were committed to driving and delivering the actions and further added that the challenge was to understand, quantify and report the impact of these actions.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport stated that a report on the Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy had been considered by the Committee and Executive at their December 2022 meetings. She recommended Members referred to this report and advised that this was one element of the wider approach and consideration being taken in regard to the issue of active travel and carbon emissions.

The Chair noted the comment from the Chair of Manchester Climate Change Partnership regarding the ask of government. She advised that following the March meeting an email had been sent to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero inviting him to attend a meeting with the Committee, however this invitation had been declined.

The Chair thanked the guests for presenting the report and responding to Members questions. In noting the report, she recommended that when the Manchester Climate Change Agency/ Partnership 2022/23 Annual Report was submitted for consideration at the Committee's October meeting this report should include information in relation to next steps, clearly defined actions and discussion of the challenges.

Decision

The Committee recommend that when the Manchester Climate Change Agency/ Partnership 2022/23 Annual Report is submitted for consideration at the Committee's October meeting this should include information in relation to next steps, clearly defined actions, and challenges.

ECCNSC/23/31 The Council's Procurement and Wider Actions to Support Reductions In Consumption-Based Emissions

The Committee considered the report of Strategic Lead Commissioning, Integrated Commissioning and Procurement that provided an update on the steps being taken in relation to the Council's procurement and more widely to reduce carbon emissions, specifically emissions associated with the goods, services and works that the council 'consumes'.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background, with a definition of the different emission categories;
- Discussion of the main issues across a range of different activities;
- Providing examples; and

- Discussion of the current challenges, with particular reference to the measurement of Scope 3 emissions.

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

- What monitoring of contracts was undertaken to ensure they were compliant with the 10% environmental weighting in evaluations;
- Was 10% environmental an appropriate weighting;
- Welcoming the information provided that small organisations, including VCSE organisations were putting forward good scoring bids and demonstrating carbon reduction plans;
- An update was requested on the training given to commissioners and procurement staff;
- A view was sought as to the government developing a new procurement portal system in preparation for the Procurement Bill coming into force; and
- Noting that contractors that included vehicle use should be encouraged to adopt appropriate driving practices to reduce environmental impacts.

The Strategic Lead Commissioning responded to the Members comments by stating that all contracts were monitored in accordance with the usual contract management protocols. He advised that dialogue and engagement with providers was important adding that Construction and Highways had a bespoke tool to measure and monitor projects. He stated that the 10% weighting was an appropriate level, commenting that any more could risk quality. He added that no other Authority required more than 10%. He advised that Manchester had led on this approach and positive outcomes were being realised. He acknowledged the comments raised regarding VCSE organisations, stating that a number of engagement events had been delivered and good practice shared. He stated that this approach complimented the VCSE Grant Funding programme so that a consistent message regarding climate change was delivered.

The Strategic Lead Commissioning stated that specific training had been delivered to Commissioners, Contract Managers and Procurement Staff in relation to the 10% environmental weighting. He reported that this built upon the Carbon Literacy Training that had been undertaken by all staff. He stated that the feedback from staff had been very positive, and the intention was to establish an e-learning package for staff, in addition to the informal support that was provided to staff.

The Strategic Lead Commissioning responded to the concern expressed by the Chair in regard to the new government procurement portal. He stated that the exact details were currently unknown, however representation had been made regarding the need to acknowledge local prioritise.

In reply to the discussion regarding specific driving practices he stated that he would look into this following the meeting, however commented that in the example referred to, monitoring data would be built into the contract and specialist software would be used to identify the most efficient routes to realise emissions savings.

Decision

To note the report.

ECCNSC/23/32 Final Report and Recommendations of the Climate Change Ward Action Plans Task and Finish Group

The Committee considered the report of Climate Change Ward Action Plans Task and Finish Group that presented the findings of the detailed investigation undertaken by the Group.

The Committee were invited to note the report and endorse the recommendations.

Decision

To note the report and endorse the recommendations as listed at section 8 of the report.

ECCNSC/23/33 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 invited Members to nominate areas of interest that they would like included on the Committee's Work Programme. These suggestions were collected by the Scrutiny Support Officer and the Chair, in consultation with Executive Members, other Scrutiny Chairs and Officers would schedule items that fell within the remit of the Committee.

Decision

The Committee notes the report and agrees the work programme, subject to the above comments.