

Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 11 January 2024

Present:

Councillor Shilton Godwin – in the Chair
Councillors Holt, Ilyas, McCaul, Wiest and Wright

Apologies: Councillor Chohan, Collins and Razaq

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
Councillor Ahmed Ali, Deputy Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods
Councillor White, Executive Member for Housing and Development
Neil Robinson, Corporate Social Responsibility & Future Airspace Director, MAG (Manchester Airports Group)
Dr Bethan Owen, Research Fellow at Centre for Aviation, Transport and the Environment
Samantha Nicholson, Director Manchester Climate Agency
Megan Black, Head of Logistics & Environment TfGM

ECCNSC/24/1 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 December 2023 as a correct record.

ECCNSC/24/2 Compliance and Enforcement Services - Performance in 2022/23

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) that provided an update on demand for and performance of the Compliance and Enforcement service during 2022/23. The report also provided a forward look at on-going and new challenges as a result of changes to legislation, policy and areas of growth that would have an impact on the work carried out by Compliance and Enforcement teams.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background to the service;
- Describing the variety of teams that make up the Compliance and Enforcement services and their remits;
- Information on the demand on service with comparative data;
- Case studies across a range of activities;
- Information on proactive work across a range of activities;

- Information on programmed work across a range of activities;
- Information and data relating to formal enforcement action;
- Discussion of ongoing and emerging challenges; and
- An update on the introduction of the new case management system.

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

- Welcoming the informative report and suggesting that this report be circulated to all Councillors for information;
- Recognising the work undertaken by the staff in the various teams to improve the environment for the residents of Manchester;
- Were there enough resources across the teams to deliver the scale of work described;
- Noting that benchmarking and comparative data would be useful in future update reports with consideration given to population change;
- Noting that in the future the Committee may wish to consider receiving reports on specific activities of interest so that deeper consideration could be given to a specific area;
- What was the approach to removing graffiti from private land;
- Had there been any analysis undertaken as to the impact of using CCTV to tackle environmental crimes;
- What was the approach taken to fly-tipping incidents when legal action was not pursued;
- Were fines secured as a result of legal action ringfenced for the respective service area taking enforcement action;
- Noting the proliferation of vape shops on the high street, often selling illegal products and the public health risk these posed to specifically to young people;
- The issue of damp and mould in housing was an issue for many residents across the city;
- Illegal evictions and the use of Section 21 Notice to Quit needed to end;
- Calling for more enforced sales of empty properties to bring more houses back into the market;
- Who would enforce any breaches of a Construction Management Plan; and
- More Selective Licensing Schemes needed to be established to ensure greater control of the Private Rented Sector and to raise housing conditions within the Private Rented Sector.

The Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety welcomed the positive comments from the Committee and said that this would be relayed to the staff. She further paid tribute to her colleagues who had collated all of the information to publish in the report. She addressed the issue of benchmarking and said that this would be difficult to meaningfully do as Manchester did more than many other Local Authorities and different Local Authorities organised their services differently which made comparing like with like challenging. She stated that they did use statistics published at a national level, where these were available, and liaised with other core cities to share learning and good practice. She said that the Compliance and Performance Team did monitor trends and were alive to the issue of population trends. She commented that the new case management system that would replace the current FLARE system would strengthen this work.

The Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety said that it was the responsibility of the land / property owner to remove graffiti. She said that information was available on the Council's website to advise people as to where responsibilities rested depending on the tenure of land/property. She said that they would work with landowners to encourage them to remove graffiti and ultimately the Council could undertake enforcement action and remove graffiti, however she added that this would be at a cost to the public purse. She did clarify that any racist or hate crime related graffiti would be removed. She said that where fly-tipping cases were not pursued for legal action due to a lack of evidence this would be removed, adding that all Requests for Service were looked into by officers.

The Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety stated that additional resources for teams would always be welcomed. She said that all available resources were deployed to deliver the work and respond to changes in legislation. She stated that when considered necessary, a business case would be prepared for additional resources.

The Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety said that CCTV was a useful tool to identify vehicles that were responsible for fly-tipping and other environmental crimes. She added that any prosecutions were publicised via press releases. In reply to the question relating to Construction Management Plans she commented that this would be the responsibility of Planning.

In response to the discussion regarding the selling of vapes, the Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety said that this was an issue that cut across a number of services. She said that Trading Standards did undertake test purchasing exercises and that Trading Standards worked closely with Greater Manchester Police (GMP). She said that local intelligence from residents and Councillors helped to inform how work was targeted and all powers available were used to address the issue of illegal vapes and the selling to minors. She said that currently this was a significant area of work for the service and work was ongoing with Public Health colleagues to reiterate and articulate the key messaging on this issue.

In response to a question regarding people trafficking, the Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety said that this crime fell within the remit of GMP, however if staff became aware of any suspected cases when undertaking their routine activities they would make the appropriate referral, in a similar way any safeguarding referrals would be made if officers had any concerns.

The Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety said that the allocation of money resulting from enforcement action and fines depended on the legislation under which the action was taken. She said that, for example, receipts from Fixed Penalty Notices and Civil Penalties would be retained by the Council and ringfenced, however, some fines issued by the Courts would be paid to the Treasury.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development said that Manchester was alert to the issue of damp and mould, illegal evictions and continued the call for an end to Section 21 evictions. He said that any tenant could make a Request for Service for

issues related to damp and mould, adding that they did not have to live within a designated Selective Licensing area. He commented that everyone was entitled to live in safe accommodation and Manchester would continue to support residents. He said that the intention was to extend the Selective Licensing Scheme and progress against this ambition was reported to the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development said that the legal process to secure and enforce the sale of an empty property was complex and could be lengthy, however it was the intention to increase the exercising of a range of powers to bring more empty properties back into use.

The Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods paid tribute to the staff working across the various teams who worked hard, with many competing pressures on behalf of the residents of the city. She stated that the service was understaffed due to the ongoing budget restrictions that had been imposed on the Council over the previous years that had seen cuts to Neighbourhood Services. She made a call for action by residents, businesses and partners to make changes and take action to improve the physical environment of the city and neighbourhoods.

Decision

To note the report.

[Councillor Wright declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest as she is an employee at His Majesty's Revenue and Customs]

ECCNSC/24/3 Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan Quarterly Progress Report: Quarter 3 (October - December 2023)

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that provides an update and overview of progress made in delivering the Council's refreshed Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) during Quarter 3 2023-24 (October – December 2023)

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background, noting that the refreshed CCAP was endorsed by the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee and approved by the Council's Executive Committee in September 2022;
- Providing an update on carbon emissions and noting that emissions reported as part of the Quarter 3 report covered the previous quarter (Q2), in this case July to September 2023 due to energy billing being quarterly in arrears;
- Reporting that as a result of the National Grid increasing the amount of natural gas and coal in the production of electricity over the last year, this had increased the carbon intensity of the national electricity system by 7%, which in turn impacted our own emissions, via the conversion factor; and
- Information relating to the key messages for Quarter 3 across a range of activities, noting that since 2020 the Council had remained within its carbon

budget each year and the Quarter 3 report showed continued progress was being made with the Council being on track to meet its 2025 target.

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

- Welcoming the report and the progress reported to date;
- Was there any risk to the Active Travel Plans for the city as a result of national government funding arrangements;
- Noting the lack of government funding to support the ambitions of the city, particularly in relation to the important issue of housing retrofit;
- Welcoming the production of the 'Developer Design Guide' and the review of the 'Manchester Build Standard' planned for 2024;
- Welcoming the information provided on the full stock condition survey that had been undertaken across the whole Council owned housing stock as part of the Housing Carbon Reduction workstream;
- Welcoming the information provided in relation to Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems; and
- Supporting the proposal for Manchester to become a Carbon Literate City.

The Zero Carbon Manager commented that progress on the delivery of the Active Travel Plan was periodically reported to the Committee and any relevant updates would be included in the next update report. She said that the Highways Department had been significantly involved in drafting the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Guide. She commented an issue was in relation to the ongoing maintenance of these and consideration was being given to this. She commented that the stock condition survey had been a useful exercise as this would inform the work around the issue of Housing Carbon Reduction.

The Zero Carbon Manager stated that there was planned projection of the carbon budget towards 2038, noting that the impact on this by such initiatives such as the Power Purchase Arrangements would need to be reported, adding that it was important to recognise that some initiatives would contribute to Manchester's zero carbon ambition but impact may not be realised immediately and consideration would be given as to how best to articulate this trajectory and report to Committee. She also stated that consideration was also been given to the next reiteration of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan and this would be considered by the Committee at the appropriate time.

In response to a question asked in relation to housing retrofit the Zero Carbon Manager noted that a substantive report on this topic was scheduled for consideration by the Committee at the March meeting.

The Head of City Policy commented that a full review of the Manchester Build Standard was planned for 2024. Once the review was completed, the work would be considered for inclusion in the new Manchester Local Plan along with other policy proposals.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport responded to the discussion relating to government funding and stated that the continued lobbying for additional

funding was undertaken and all available resources were used to support the activities described.

Decision

To note the report.

ECCNSC/24/4 Manchester Airport and Aviation Emissions

The Committee considered the report of the Manchester City Council, Manchester Airports Group, Centre for Aviation and Transport and Environment, Manchester Climate Change Agency that provided an update on emissions from Manchester Airport and aviation.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Discussion of the Council's role in relation to reducing aviation emissions via its shareholder relationship to Manchester Airports Group (MAG) who own and operate three UK airports including Manchester Airport, its membership of Manchester Climate Change Partnership and as an employer;
- An update from MAG which provided information on their work to decarbonise their ground operations and flights to and from Manchester Airport;
- A report from the Centre for Aviation, Transport and Environment (CATE) based at Manchester Metropolitan University on estimating the scale and impact of non-CO₂ aviation emissions on climate; and
- A report from the University of Manchester who had been commissioned by the Manchester Climate Change Agency and Partnership which sought to estimate the aviation related CO₂ emissions from flights taken by Manchester residents.

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

- Challenging the continued narrative that the economic benefits of the airport outweighed the need to take immediate action to address the climate emergency;
- Challenging the assertion that aviation emissions could be reduced by technology, asserting that this was largely untested and unproven;
- There was no accompany carbon reduction action plan to report progress and key milestones;
- Noting that there was a contradiction between using agricultural land and domestic waste to manufacture Sustainable Aviation Fuel when the wider message and intention was to reduce waste;
- The need to reduce the number of flights taken, adding that the report appeared to celebrate an increase in passenger numbers;
- The number of domestic flights needed to reduce, and people should use other forms of sustainable transport;
- Criticising the cancellation of HS2 to Manchester; and
- Challenging the assertion that an increase in the costs of flights due to the introduction of new technologies would reduce passenger numbers, adding that affluent people would continue to fly and the less well-off would be excluded.

Neil Robinson, CSR & Future Airspace Director, MAG stated that industry initiatives, such as increased efficiency in the use of aircraft and airspace would contribute to reducing emissions associated with the aviation industry. He said that Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) was a proven technology, and the challenge was now to produce this at scale to service the aviation industry. He said that there were plans to establish five production plants across the UK, with one of the servicing Manchester Airport directly. He further commented that existing generation of aircraft could use a minimum of 10% SAF. In terms of carbon savings, he said that this would be realised through the life cycle of SAF, namely in the manufacturing of SAF as opposed to kerosene. He further commented that the approach was consistent with the government's Jet Zero strategy, the framework and plan for achieving net zero aviation by 2050 and was consistent with the national carbon budget. He commented that support of this strategy was reflected across the industry nationally. He also referred to hydrogen and electric technology, adding that this had previously not been included in plans, however as technological advances had been made these were now included. He further reiterated the economic impact of the airport for the city, noting that a report on this subject had been considered by the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee at their recent December meeting.

In response to the discussion relating to domestic flights, Neil Robinson, CSR & Future Airspace Director, MAG stated that analysis of these indicated that the majority of these journeys included crossing a body of water and would require an alternative journey in excess of four hours.

Dr Bethan Owen, Research Fellow at Centre for Aviation, Transport and the Environment (CATE) stated that the aviation industry was a global industry, and it was important to consider this topic in terms of an international context and that global action was the best way to address aviation emissions.

The Head of City Policy stated that MAG was a member of the Climate Change Partnership and MAG were leading on the issue aviation emissions at a national and international level. He further commented that the 10 Greater Manchester Local Authorities shareholding resulted in places on the Board at MAG which facilitated challenge and conversations on this issue. He further commented that it was important to acknowledge that the airport was carbon neutral in relation to its ground operations and has committed to being zero carbon by 2038.

The Director of Manchester Climate Change Agency reiterated the role of the Partnership to bring stakeholders together to encourage and facilitate action to tackle the climate emergency.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport acknowledged the strength of feeling expressed by the Committee and said that consideration would be given as to how best to present and report this topic to future meetings of the Committee.

Decision

To note the report.

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director, Growth and Development that provided information on the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan (GM CAP) as submitted to the Joint Air Quality Unit for consideration, December 2023.

Appended to the report for reference was the complete report that had been considered by the Greater Manchester Air Quality Administration Committee at their meeting of 20 December 2023.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background;
- Noting that the 10 GM local authorities were committed to delivering an investment-led, non-charging GM Clean Air Plan;
- Discussion on the development of an investment-led Clean Air Plan for Greater Manchester;
- Consideration of the bus investment of £51.2 million;
- The approach to taxis and associated taxi licensing conditions to reduce associated emissions; and
- Targeted Local Traffic Management Measures.

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

- Whilst recognising the approach of Greater Manchester to improve air quality, Manchester should develop a bespoke, Manchester specific strategy to improve air quality that exceeds the national minimum standard;
- Noting that poor air quality represented a significant public health risk to all residents of the city;
- Was wind conditions and the impact of high building factored into modelling'
- The need to articulate a collective message on the issue of air quality;
- A member commented that he was not confident that the modelling in relation to Quay Street would improve air quality and this needed to be considered in the context of the wider road network; and
- The need to consider wood burners and the impact these had on air quality.

The Head of Logistics & Environment TfGM sated that Greater Manchester was now dependent on the government to provide a response to the submission.

The Head of Network Management described the modelling that had been undertaken to inform the plans for Quay Street and adjacent streets to allow access and address issues of through traffic. Officers also stated that high buildings and the impact these had on air quality was factored into any modelling, however accepted that this needed to be strengthened. Members were advised that any schemes would be monitored and evaluated following their introduction.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport stated that conversations had already commenced to develop a Manchester specific clean air plan, and this would be reported to the Committee at an appropriate time. The Committee were further

advised that a GM campaign in relation to wood burners had been recently launched and information would be circulated to the Committee.

Decision

To note the report.

ECCNSC/24/6 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.

Decision

The Committee notes the report and agrees the work programme.