

# **Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 10 October 2024**

### **Present:**

Councillor Shilton Godwin – in the Chair  
Councillors Ilyas, Kirwin-McGinley, Razaq, Richards and Wiest

**Apologies:** Councillors Hussain and Mumtaz

### **Also present:**

Councillor Rawlins, Executive Member for Clean Air, Environment and Transport  
Councillor McCaul, Deputy Executive Member for Clean Air, Environment and Transport  
Samantha Nicholson, Director of Manchester Climate Change Agency

### **ECCNSC/24/37      Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 5 September 2024 as a correct record.

### **ECCNSC/24/38      Manchester Active Travel Strategy and Investment Plan – Update on Progress**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director, Growth and Development that provided a summary of progress on delivery of the aspirations and commitments of the Manchester Active Travel Strategy and Investment Plan.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background;
- Progress update with a summary of schemes delivered to date;
- A summary of other upcoming schemes; and
- Consideration of E-Mobility (Electromobility, also known as e-mobility is the principle of using electric propulsion for a wide range of transportation types).

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

- Welcoming the report and the progress reported to date;
- What were the costs associated with delivering School Streets;
- Were the 7 Schools Streets now permanent;
- Were local volunteer and community groups engaged with to increase capacity to deliver School Streets schemes;
- The potential for the displacement of traffic to neighbouring streets following the introduction of School Streets;

- Did the strategy have the capacity to adapt to the developing city and to respond to the needs of different users;
- What was the timescale for the implementation of moving traffic offences;
- Supporting the reduction of the default speed limit in the city to 20mph and what were the timescales for this, noting that slower vehicles gave cyclists increased confidence when moving around the city;
- The issue of irresponsible pavement parking and the barriers this caused to people using the footpaths;
- The increased irresponsible and at times dangerous use of e-bikes, particularly those associated with food delivery services;
- Information was sought on the Wythenshawe Active Travel Study; and
- What learning had been obtained for the Parsonage Road Safer Streets scheme.

The Active Travel Lead, Infrastructure and Environment said that the pilot funding to deliver the 7 School Streets schemes had paid for Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders, training for volunteer marshals and associated materials. He commented that local interested groups were engaged on this subject to increase capacity to deliver the schemes. He said that at this stage they were not permanent.

The Active Travel Lead, Infrastructure and Environment said that the strategy provided a framework to articulate the standards of provision in relation to active travel and that this was taken into consideration in all strategic regeneration frameworks and planning. The Strategic Director, Growth and Development commented that the Manchester Active Travel Strategy had been developed to articulate the coherent approach and prioritise adopted across the city and this supported funding bids to deliver schemes. She further commented that the strategy was reviewed and would be refreshed in the future to reflect the strategic infrastructure planning across the city.

The Head of Network Management said that 7 School Streets schemes had been piloted, and that this pilot would be evaluated. He said that consideration would be given as to appropriate locations for any future schemes, including using new Moving Traffic Offences powers to enforce School Streets measures. He noted that there were challenges associated with such schemes, such as creating an exemption list of number plates to ensure that legitimate drivers were not penalised. The Active Travel Lead, Infrastructure and Environment addressed the issue of displaced traffic and said that he would raise this with the project team, adding that schools were required to collate data in relation to active travel as part of the pilot. He said that the intention of the pilot was to influence behaviour change and not displace car parking.

The Active Travel Lead, Infrastructure and Environment said that strategy articulated the commitment to reduce the default speed limit in the city to 20mph, and also reduce 40mph speed limits to 30mph. He said that this was key priority and work on this was being progressed and Members would be briefed on this at the appropriate time.

The Executive Member for Clean Air, Environment and Transport stated that pavement parking was a significant issue, adding that the roads in Manchester were never built to accommodate the number of vehicles that existed across the city. She said that she continued to work with local MPs to raise this issue with the government so as to seek a workable solution and appropriate enforcement powers. She said that options for target hardening campaigns in hotspots could be considered to engage and educate drivers on the issue. The Strategic Director, Growth and Development stated that pavement parking had a detrimental impact on the delivery of active travel schemes. The Head of Network Management acknowledged the comments made by a Member of her experience of visiting a European city and their response to pavement parking by having segregated lanes on some pavements to facilitate on street car parking. He said that consideration would be given to all viable solutions, however noted that damage to the footpath network would need to carefully be considered in any decision.

The Strategic Director, Growth and Development said that the issue of e-bikes was understood, and discussions were ongoing at a GMCA level to address this. She suggested that a report that detailed the powers available to protect pedestrians and other highway users be submitted at an appropriate time.

The Active Travel Lead, Infrastructure and Environment said that the aim of the Wythenshawe Active Travel Study was to develop an understanding of volume and demand to inform the development of long-term network of schemes. He said this study and evaluation would create the business case to support the bidding for funding to deliver a pipeline of projects. He said all of this would be subject to the usual consultation exercise will all relevant stakeholders. He commented that he was happy to meet with local Members to discuss this in further detail if required. The Executive Member for Clean Air, Environment and Transport added that there was a significant redevelopment programme planned for Wythenshawe and this work complimented this wider development programme. She added that the consultation on the Parsonage Road Safer Streets scheme was ongoing and the lessons from this would be reflected upon.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

## **ECCNSC/24/39      Single Use Plastics**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Integrated Commissioning and Procurement that provided an update on the work undertaken across the Council on its commitment on Single Use Plastics (SUPs), which was part of an action within the Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background;
- Information relating to national legislation and policy;
- Progress update across a range of activities, noting that the development and approval of a SUPs policy and action plan, outlining

- twenty objectives for the reduction of SUPs across the council had been approved by the Council's Executive in December 2023; and
- Discussion of challenges and next steps.

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

- Welcoming the significant progress reported and expressing their appreciation to all staff involved in this important work;
- What could be done to encourage community groups who accessed Neighbourhood Investment Funding (NIF) not to use SUPs when delivering local events;
- Welcoming the work undertaken with schools, however noting that many secondary schools experienced plastic bottle littering around entrances;
- What other considerations had been given to increase the installation at different locations of water refill points;
- Providing positive personal testimonies to the work, particularly in leisure centres;
- Had any analysis been undertaken with Biffa and waste and recycling centres to quantify and demonstrate any reduction in SUPs; and
- SUPs and Takeaways.

The Zero Carbon Manager said that the Climate Change Officers working alongside Neighbourhood Officers did work closely with local voluntary and community groups when applying for NIF funding and good practice was shared in regard to SUPs. She said that consideration was being given to the written guidance in relation to SUPs that would be provided in the next round of NIF funding to strengthen this message. She further commented that conversations were ongoing with local businesses to explore opportunities to deliver more water refill stations, adding that delivery and support for this could also form part of their social value obligations. The Head of Integrated Commissioning and Procurement commented that the Social Value Governance Board were giving consideration to including this opportunity in their written guidance to strengthen this argument.

The Zero Carbon Manager said that a lot of positive work had been achieved with schools on the issue of SUPs. She said this had been delivered by the sharing of good practice, briefing sessions and webinars. In relation to the issue of plastic bottles discarded around the entrance area of secondary schools the Chair commented that each school should address this through their own climate change action plans.

With regard to SUPs and Takeaways, the Zero Carbon Manager said the Council led by example on this issue and this was now embedded across the organisation. She said that the Licensing and Enforcement Teams had adopted an approach of engagement and education with takeaway businesses in regard to their legal requirement, noting that from 1st October businesses including restaurants, cafés and takeaways would no longer be able to provide bowls, plates or cutlery made from single-use plastic, including polystyrene. She said that the GM SUP Working Group were lobbying for a national campaign on this issue. The Executive Member for Clean Air, Environment and Transport stated that she would support this call.

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the next MCC Climate Change Action Plan would seek to build and maintain the momentum that had been established on the issue of SUPs.

The Executive Member for Clean Air, Environment and Transport said that she welcomed the continued challenge and feedback that had been provided by the Committee on the issue of SUPs over the years. She said the report described significant progress on this issue and this was now embedded across the organisation and she further paid tribute to all the staff involved. The Chair reiterated this statement and recognised the important work delivered.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

### **ECCNSC/24/40 Manchester Climate Change Partnership and Agency Impact Report 2023-24**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Manchester Climate Change Agency that outlined the work of the Manchester Climate Change Partnership and its members, of which Manchester City Council is one, and of the Manchester Climate Change Agency between April 2023 and March 2024.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Highlighting the key activities and impacts delivered between April 2023 and March 2024 by Manchester's Climate Change Partnership and Agency, organised across four strategic priorities:
- *Targets and Tracking*: Helping our city to set the right strategy and targets, and to understand its progress towards them.
- *Taking Action*: Helping our city to take action, learn from others and build on best practice.
- *A Fair Transition*: Supporting an inclusive, socially just transition to a zero carbon, climate resilient future.
- *Positioning Manchester*: Helping to position Manchester as a world class city for climate action;
- Providing 28 success stories from across the Partnership and Agency to illustrate the breadth and depth of climate action being taken across our city;
- Noting that Manchester City Council's own climate change action plan was aligned to the city's science-based carbon budget and its zero carbon target date; and
- Recognising that more urgent action at scale, by all sectors was needed to tackle the climate crisis.

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

- Welcoming the format of the report, commenting that it was well written and very accessible to the lay reader;

- Where are the emissions targets for city available and reported;
- Noting that Manchester's Climate Change Framework (2020- 2025) set a science-based target for the city to reach zero carbon by 2038 and a carbon budget for direct emissions of 15m tCO2 for the period 2018-2100, however 10m tCO2 had been spent to date;
- New developments should provide appropriate bike storage for all occupants;
- Were faith groups engaged on the subject of climate change;
- Information was sought in regard to Carbon Literacy Training for Council staff; and
- Discussing carbon offsetting, commenting that caution had to be taken in regard to this.

The Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency informed the Committee that the emissions targets for the city were available in the Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020 – 2025 and the subsequent 2022 update. She said that a range of data sets were being used to collate and produce meaningful reporting of activity across the city, noting the complexity of the challenge of this. She acknowledged the carbon budget spend to date and the concerns expressed by the Committee. She said this was fully acknowledged and the climate crisis was understood. She said that the approach of the Agency and Partnership was to continue to drive this programme and agenda with purpose and positivity as it would be easy to become swamped and overwhelmed by the scale of the challenge. She said all levers and powers would be used to drive this work and stressed the importance of working collaboratively to tackle the climate crisis as no one organisation could resolve the problem in isolation. She said that there was a lot of positive actions and initiatives taking place across the city and the intention was to build on this momentum and increase this at scale and pace. She noted the discussion in relation to carbon offsetting and said this was not endorsed by the Manchester Climate Change Agency as a means of achieving the required emissions reductions.

The Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency said that faith groups were involved in the Partnership, adding that Dean Rogers Govender was member of the Board. She made reference to the Our Faith, Our Planet group, which aimed to promote shared values amongst faith communities, to educate and inform people about climate change and its effects and to share examples of best practice, with particular focus on preserving public buildings and places of worship and working towards reducing the carbon footprint.

The Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency said that the Partnership had brought a range of developers and specialists together from across the industry to consider carbon emissions and associated building standards and practices. She said retrofitting was also included in these conversations. She said this experience and approach enabled the sharing of good practice and lessons learned and this model could be used to engage with other business and sectors. She said that a significant barrier was funding, citing the experience of retrofitting commercial buildings and the associated liability of costs, in addition to an underdeveloped supply chain. She said work was being coordinated and progressed on this activity at a GMCA level. She commented that discussions were also ongoing with Department

for Energy Security & Net Zero to unlock funding to deliver a pipeline of net zero projects at scale.

The Strategic Lead, Resources & Programmes said that to date 46% of Council staff were certified as Carbon Literacy trained. He said that the ambition was to achieve 50% by the end of 2024, noting that the delivery of Carbon Literacy training continued to make progress and was on target to reach Gold Accreditation Status by 2025. The Committee noted that a substantive report on this activity would be considered at the meeting scheduled for 13 February 2025. The Chair further stated that Manchester had launched an initiative to become the UK's first Carbon Literate City as part of the drive to become zero carbon by 2038. This work would be co-ordinated by Manchester City Council working with The Carbon Literacy Project and aimed to achieve the status by getting the equivalent of 15% of the city's population, 85,349 people trained and certified as Carbon Literate.

The Executive Member for Clean Air, Environment and Transport stated that the Council remained committed to delivering the net zero ambitions of the city as a partner of the agency and would continue to use all available levers and spheres of influence, both locally, nationally and internationally to progress this ambition.

The Chair in closing this item of business expressed her gratitude to the Director of Manchester Climate Change Agency and the important work that was being delivered. She further acknowledged that the team was relatively small and she asked that the appreciation of the Committee be relayed to the team. The Chair said that she was optimistic that the issue of climate change would be addressed by the new government following recent policy announcements in relation to renewable energy and the creation of Great British Energy.

### **Decision**

To note the report.

### **ECCNSC/24/41      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.

In response to a question from the Chair the Strategic Lead, Resources & Programmes stated it was anticipated that the impact of the changes to the decarbonisation of the national grid would be reflected in the next quarterly emissions report.

### **Decision**

The Committee notes the report and agrees the work programme.

