

# **Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 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

Councillor White, Executive Member for Employment and Development

Samantha Nicholson, Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency

## **ECCSC/22/27      Urgent Business – Flooding in Pakistan**

The Chair introduced an item of urgent business by advising the Committee that she had invited Councillor Razaq to speak on the recent flooding in Pakistan. Noting that this extreme weather event was a result of the climate crisis, the Chair also noted that Bangladesh and Madagascar, amongst many other places, had also experienced disasters as a result of climate change in recent years.

Councillor Razaq spoke on the devastating events that have impacted thousands of citizens in Pakistan. Noting that it was reported that at least 1,136 people had been killed since June and roads, crops, homes and bridges washed away across the country due to the flooding. Officials had estimated that more than 33 million Pakistanis, one in seven people had been affected by the flooding. He encouraged all to donate to the humanitarian response.

The statement was accompanied by a short video submitted by Councillor Razaq's nephew who was currently living in Pakistan.

The Committee and all those present observed a period of silence for all victims of the recent flooding in Pakistan.

### **Decision**

To note the item of urgent business.

## **ECCSC/22/28      Minutes**

### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2022 as a correct record.

The Committee considered the report of the Manchester Climate Change Agency that described that the 2022 Update to Manchester's Climate Change Framework (2020-25) and presented the findings of the detailed modelling done to identify granular targets for reducing the city's direct emissions by 50%, that would be necessary for the whole city to stay within its carbon budget.

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

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background, noting that the Manchester Climate Change Partnership (MCCP) and Agency (MCCA) had been given the responsibility to set the city's strategy for tackling the climate emergency;
- Articulating the purpose and rationale for the 2022 Update;
- Providing an overview of the ongoing work on the Framework's other headline objectives;
- The Update incorporated over 150 recommended actions organised into four categories according to where there was direct control to deliver, affect or influence the required change or outcome;
- Noting that the Council's delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan would make a substantial contribution to the implementation of the 2022 Update to Manchester's Climate Change Framework (2020-25); and
- Key messages and next steps.

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

- Recognising the amount of work that had gone into producing the report and noting that the views of the Committee had been taken into consideration;
- What methodology was used to produce the carbon budget figures reported throughout the report;
- Recognising the scale of funding and resources required to deliver retrofitting and the need to access private sources of funding;
- The complexity of the sources of funding that were made available to support retrofitting activity;
- Planning policy should be developed to ensure all new developments were energy efficient so that they would not require retrofitting in future years;
- Planning policy needed to consider carbon emissions at all stages of a buildings life, including the construction stage;
- The need to promote and encourage sustainable travel policies for staff;
- The need to use this report to communicate to all residents and promote this regionally and nationally;
- The need to consider the use of appropriate language when engaging with residents on the subject of carbon budgets;
- The need to develop the action points with those responsible for delivering them identified so this could be reported on and progress monitored;

- Noting that in future update reports the Committee would seek reports on specific key areas of activity;
- Welcoming consideration being given to introducing a Work Place Levy and Ultra Low Emissions Zones; and
- Recommending that the Climate Change Partnership engage with the Greater Manchester Pension Fund to encourage them to divest from fossil fuels.

In response to the comments and questions from Members, the Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency advised that the SCATTER tool was used to model the scale of action needed for the city to reduce its emissions by 50%. She advised that there was information on this tool available on the Agencies' website.

The Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency further recognised the comment in relation to the need to access private finance to support the scale of retrofit work required. She added that it was an action to track and report progress on this activity. In terms of reporting funding streams, she advised that the financial modelling provided had informed the business case to Government to support this activity. She also advised that analysis of some of the investment into housing retrofit in Manchester should be possible via schemes like the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, Green Home Grant and Your Home Better scheme and therefore could be reported to the Committee in future updates.

The Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency stated that the need to consider all carbon emissions related to the construction industry was understood and conversations with the industry that included all relevant stakeholders across Greater Manchester were ongoing to understand and address barriers to delivering on this.

The Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency acknowledged the comment made regarding the use of the term carbon budget and advised that consideration would be given as to how this message was communicated to residents to ensure it was meaningful. She advised that a targeted communications strategy would be used to promote this Framework.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport commented that the Local Plan was a lever for the Council to drive change across the construction industry, noting that a report on planning policy and climate change was scheduled for the Committee's February 2023 meeting. She further commented that the Council's staff travel policy had been updated and communicated to all staff, adding that it was everyone's responsibility to make informed decisions in relation to their travel choices. She advised that there were a number of positive examples of other organisations developing staff active travel policies that included lease schemes for bikes and subsidised travel passes and she further referenced the recent capping of bus fares.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport further advised that consideration continued to be given to introducing Ultra Low Emissions Zones. She noted the comments regarding the need for appropriate language in all messaging on this important issue and advised that all communications on this would be sense checked with Members to ensure they were appropriate for their residents.

The Chair concluded the item by reiterating the urgency of responding to the climate change crisis, noting this also needed to be considered in the context of the cost-of-living crisis and social justice.

## **Decision**

The Committee

1. Recommend that the Climate Change Partnership engage with the Greater Manchester Pension Fund to encourage them to divest from fossil fuels;
2. Recommend that the 2022 Update to Manchester's Climate Change Framework is circulated to all Members of the Council.

The Committee further endorse the recommendations that the Executive:

1. Formally adopt the 2022 Update to the Manchester Climate Change Framework's aim, vision, objectives, and targets as the definition of what Manchester needs to achieve to 'play its full part in limiting the impacts of climate change';
2. On behalf of the city, endorse the 2022 Update to the Manchester Climate Change Framework (2020 – 25) as Manchester's high-level strategy for achieving the aim, vision, objectives, and targets; and
3. Support the delivery of the refreshed 2020-25 Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan to contribute towards the successful implementation of the citywide Framework.

## **ECCSC/22/30      MCC Climate Change Action Plan: Refreshed Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2025 and Annual Report 2021-22**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that presented the refreshed action plan for delivery between September 2022 – March 2025 and the latest Annual Report for the year 2021-22 of the Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25.

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

Key points and themes in the report included:

- The refreshed Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) set out new actions, building on existing ambitions;
- Key messages of the Action Plan; and
- The Annual Report bringing together the CCAP updates provided over the last 12 months (2021-22) into a single annual report and highlighting the progress which had been made during this time in terms of individual actions within the CCAP.

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

- Welcoming the introduction and reporting of SMART objectives and milestones;
- More information was sought on the Sustainable Events Guide and calling for Environmental Impact Assessments to be undertaken before and after large events;
- Can carbon data be provided at a ward level data;
- Plant based alternative food options needed to be provided at all Council events where catering was provided;
- How could the Manchester Airport Group's ambitions to reduce aviation emissions reconcile with their ambition to increase passenger numbers;
- An update was sought on the delivery of Carbon Literacy Training, and more granular detail was requested on this activity in future updates;
- The need to promote and enable active travel including walking and public transport;
- The need to consider more nature based solutions;
- The need for relevant departments, such as highways, neighbourhood teams and Arbor to collectively consider tree planting to mitigate the Urban Heat Island effect; and
- The continued call to stop using Glyphosate weed killer.

The Zero Carbon Manager advised that the post of Sustainable Events Lead had recently been recruited and more information on this post and wider activity would be reported to the Committee in future updates. She further directed Members to the online tools that they could use to obtain local data.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport advised that she would follow up the issue raised regarding plant based alternatives outside of the meeting. She further advised that the issue of local data and how this could be accessed would be included in the report 'Neighbourhood Teams and Community Engagement' scheduled for the December meeting, however prior to this the links to the tools would be circulated following this meeting. She further commented that she would raise the issue of Glyphosate weed killer with Councillor Igbon.

The Head of City Policy advised the Committee that Manchester Airport Group had provided a response to the government's Jet Zero Strategy and this would be circulated to Members following the meeting. He added that a substantive item on Manchester Airport and Aviation Emissions was scheduled to be considered by the Committee at their January 2023 meeting.

In response to a question from a Member regarding Green Skills the Chair advised that the Economy Scrutiny Committee would be considering a report on this item later the same day. She stated that Members of this Committee would be attending and contributing to the meeting. The Chair noted the comments from the Members regarding specific asks to be included in future report and that she would discuss this with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport to agree the scope of the reports scheduled on the Committee's work programme.

## **Decision**

The Committee note the report and endorse the recommendation that the Executive approve the report and accompanying appendices.

### **ECCSC/22/31      Manchester Retrofit Plan – Emerging Proposals**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Services that described that the Manchester Housing Strategy, launched in June 2022 outlined the commitment to developing a Retrofit Plan for all the housing in the city. This report is the first step towards developing the plan and provides an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee and Members to consider the emerging proposals and influence the policy in its early stages.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Why a Retrofit Plan was needed, noting that Manchester was committed to becoming a zero carbon city by 2038;
- Noting that over a fifth of the city's carbon emissions were generated by residential properties;
- Analysis of the housing stock following a modelling exercise undertaken in 2021 by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority;
- Noting that the majority of all Manchester homes will need to be retrofitted in order to decarbonise our housing stock;
- Key issues for developing and delivering a large-scale decarbonisation programme in Manchester;
- Stakeholders who will need to be involved in the development and delivery of the plan; and
- The programme for delivering the plan, recognising that the plan was likely to evolve over time as we learnt from experience and new approaches, funding opportunities and best practice emerging from other areas of the UK.

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

- The need to use all tools to improve residents' housing conditions, including the Landlord Licensing schemes;
- Recommend the establishment of a Member and Officer working group, led by the Executive Member for Employment and Development to progress this work, noting that all relevant departments should be included;
- All tools and resources, such as Council Tax and Land Registry records should be utilised to identify all private landlords in Manchester;
- The need to use the data presented within the report to inform the funding ask of government to deliver the scale of retrofit work required;
- Noting that adequate funding was required from government;
- Noting that an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) was not comparable with retrofit standards;
- Noting that those residents who had not benefited from the Building Safety Fund to address the issue of cladding would also incur the additional cost to retrofit their properties; and

- The need to share good practice on measures taken by residents to retrofit their properties, noting that the Your Homes Better GMCA web page contained a lot of useful information.

The Executive Member for Employment and Development made reference to the scale of the challenge to deliver retrofitting, however the report described the progress to date. He stated that the issue of retrofitting was essential both in terms of addressing carbon emissions and as a social justice issue, especially in the context of the cost-of-living crisis. He stated that he would continue to lobby government for appropriate funding for Manchester to deliver this important work.

The Head of Housing Services advised that all available resources would be used to improve energy efficiency and address carbon emissions. He commented that Social Housing Providers had led on this programme, and this was an example of the city leading by example. He commented that this programme also presented an opportunity to support the Work and Skills Strategy. In response to a specific question regarding concerns relating to the PFI schemes he advised that a meeting was scheduled for October with the developer to discuss this further.

The Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Transport stated that education on energy saving was important, noting that there were many charities that could provide advice and guidance on this subject. She advised that information on the Energyworks Green Doctors would be provided to all Members in the next Members' Newsletter.

## **Decision**

The Committee recommend that a Member and Officer working group, led by the Executive Member for Employment and Development be established to progress the Manchester Retrofit Plan, noting that all relevant departments should be included.

## **ECCSC/22/32      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 stated that following discussion on the previous agenda items she would discuss and agree the remit of the Active Travel report scheduled for the December 2022 meeting and the detail required within the Embedding Carbon Literacy within the Council report scheduled for November 2022. She further advised that the Retrofit Plan would also be scheduled for consideration before it was submitted to the Executive for approval.

## **Decision**

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