

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee – 9 March 2023

Subject: Parks and Open Spaces – Parks Climate Change Action Plan

Report of: Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

Summary

This report provides an overview of Manchester’s Parks Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). The report sets out the background to the development of the plan, how the plan aligns to the wider ambition of the Council and an overview of the action plan.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to consider and make comments on the contents of the report.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Parks by their nature contribute to the mitigation of carbon across the city and this is a key strand of the Parks Strategy. The development of the Parks Climate Change Action Plan has further connected the opportunities and challenges in meeting the zero-carbon target for the city into the corporate plan, ensuring that opportunities to make progress are maximised and challenges can be considered by a wider audience.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments

The Parks Climate Change Action Plan recognises the need for just and equal delivery of the climate action plan across the city, focusing on areas such as community engagement, sustainable travel for staff and visitors and adaptation of the landscape for carbon storage and sequestration. The specific actions to be undertaken in delivering the plan will be assessed to ensure that they have a positive impact on providing an inclusive and equitable service that is accessible to all residents and visitors.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Parks are partnering in new and fruitful ways with organisations and communities to increase opportunities for personal development through volunteering, work experience, employment and training.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Parks offer a unique opportunity to engage in formal educational activity in the natural environment. Opportunities to build life skills such as communication and teamwork are offered through a wide range of volunteering activities.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Parks are at the heart of our communities, offering opportunities for community cohesion through volunteering, events and activities in a setting that is open and accessible to all.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Parks are an essential part of our neighbourhoods and enhance positive outcomes for residents and businesses. The delivery of a vibrant programme of events and activities is increasing the number of visitors from outside of the City. Whilst parks naturally contribute to the low carbon city agenda, new ways of using and activating the estate in a way that can actively contribute to lowering or offsetting carbon emissions are being explored.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Parks connect our City in many different ways, physically they are expanding to offer enhanced green corridors for people and wildlife and socially by sustaining opportunities for shared experiences and common interests.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25
- Manchester City Council Climate Emergency Declaration July 2019
- Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-25 Updated 2022

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress within the Parks service in relation to climate change and the zero-carbon agenda. A key focus within the report is to update Members on the development of a Parks Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), which is the first iteration of a CCAP concentrated on one council service. Having a service specific CCAP enables the team to identify actions that it can deliver across all five of the Council's CCAP workstreams, helping the overall delivery of the MCC CCAP. It also helps to embed zero carbon approaches into 'business as usual' within the service.
- 1.2 Parks are also uniquely placed to deliver positive and visible contributions to the Council's Zero Carbon target due to the high number of resident and visitor interactions and opportunities to deliver services in a more productive manner for zero carbon and climate change across the estate.

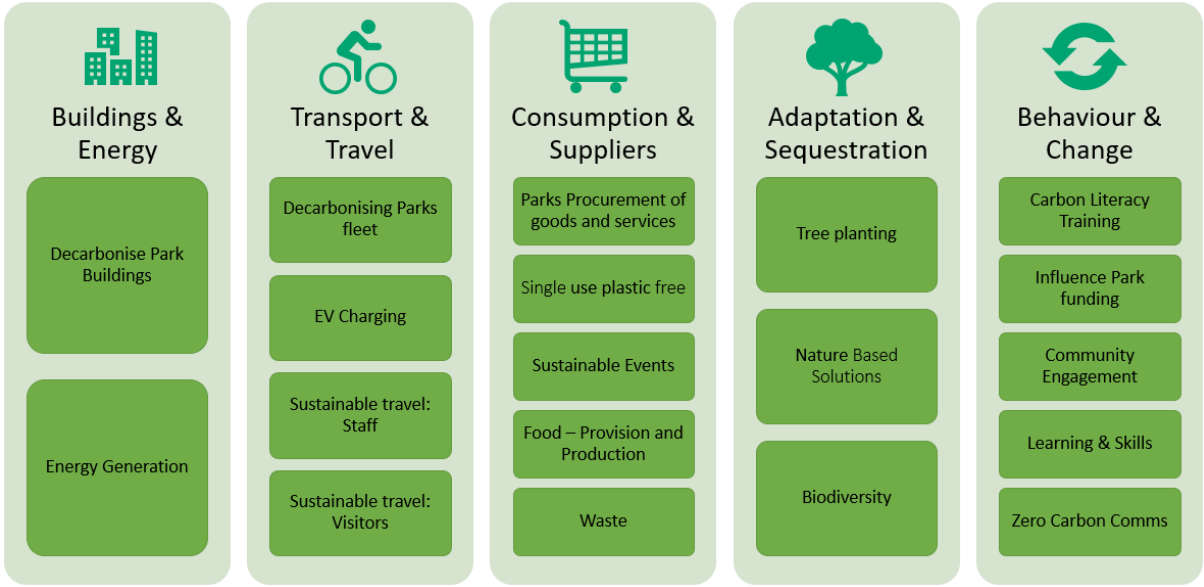
2.0 Background

- 2.1 A 'deep dive' session focused on parks and their potential to deliver across all five workstreams of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan took place at the Zero Carbon Coordination Group in May 2022. The opportunities to build on positive work that was already underway in the service was highlighted and commitment received across all workstreams to work in partnership with the service to understand the current position and the potential to generate a greater impact and increased positive outcomes at pace.
- 2.2 In September 2022 the main CCAP was refreshed with the inclusion of a new action at 4.3:
- Deliver - Producing and delivering a Parks specific Climate Change Action Plan.
 - To achieve - increased understanding of carbon emissions relating to Parks and identification of potential carbon reduction options.
- 2.3 The Zero Carbon Team have assisted in the production of a Parks CCAP to achieve:
- Increased understanding of carbon emissions relating to Parks.
 - Identification of potential carbon reduction options.
 - Wider environmental benefits such as increased biodiversity.
- 2.4 The purpose of the plan is to serve as a tool for the Parks teams to align their priorities with the main CCAP and to utilise the associated delivery workstreams for the main CCAP to prioritise and align workstream actions connected to Parks by:
- Defining realistic outcomes.
 - Determining measurable KPIs and data sources.
 - Monitoring their progress and setting targets.
 - Coordinating and focusing resources.

2.5 In many cases there is positive action already taking place and the Parks CCAP simply provides a mechanism to monitor positive progress and highlight blockages in order to overcome these. The ambition of the CCAP is to fully embed climate change thinking into the Parks service so that it becomes embedded and a subconscious consideration in every action and decision-making.

3.0 CCAP Overview

3.1 The Parks CCAP identifies the actions across all five workstreams of the Council’s CCAP, illustrated in the table below:



3.2 The actions in each workstream are detailed below.

3.2.1 Buildings and energy

Main CCAP Ref	Park CCAP Ref	Actions
1.1	1.1	Decarbonise Park Buildings - Apply the Estates Carbon Reduction Programme to Parks buildings by:
		Take learnings from Estates Buildings assessment for Parks Buildings to identify what measures can be applied to reduce emissions from buildings in Parks.
		Collaborate with the Zero Carbon arm of the Corporate Estates team to put in place a Parks estates carbon reduction plan.
1.3	1.2	Energy Generation - Generate renewable energy in Parks by:
		Identify all potential park sites for energy generation, taking into account previous feasibility work carried out and identifying further scoping work needed.

3.2.2 Travel and transport

Main CCAP Ref	Park CCAP Ref	Actions
2.2	2.1	<u>Decarbonising Parks fleet</u> - A rolling replacement of Parks fleet to electric vans, bikes and e-Cargo bikes and the appropriate charging infrastructure by:
		Support deploying and monitoring of cycles (e-Cargo and other) into parks operational fleet.
		Investigate and propose viable options for acquiring EV or sustainable fuel source for concession vehicles i.e., ice cream vans.
2.7	2.2	<u>EV Charging</u> - Support the EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy, with Park installation opportunities for Parks Fleet and visitor usage.
		Explore Commercial opportunities such as – EV charging in Parks' car parks.
2.3	2.3	<u>Sustainable travel: Staff</u> - Implement and embed the Staff Travel Policy across the Parks teams by:
		Develop engagement and promote incentives for Parks staff (e.g. sessions or workshops) on Sustainable Business travel and Active Travel planning.
2.9	2.4	<u>Sustainable travel: Visitors</u> - Develop and deliver communications on sustainable and active travel and promote incentives for Visitors to commute more sustainably to Parks e.g. for events.

3.2.3 Consumption, Emissions and Suppliers

Main CCAP Ref	Park CCAP Ref	Actions
3.1	3.1	<u>Parks Procurement of goods and services</u> - Apply Climate Change social value scoring in line with Council's procurement process to:
3.1		Use the monitoring framework (currently in development) to measure and track the emissions from goods and services procured to establish a baseline to enable a CO2 savings target to be set for future years.
		Ensure new contracts procured by Park's team include 10% environmental weighting.
3.2	3.2	<u>SUPS</u> - Reduce Single Use Plastics (SUPs) across Parks by:
3.2 & 3.6		Eradicating avoidable SUPs from across the Parks estates (i.e. cafes) by embedding and enforcing requirements to be SUP free within <u>Park trader</u> licences.
3.2		Eradicating avoidable SUPs from across Park events.
3.2		Eradicating avoidable SUPs and other packaging purchased by Parks team.
3.3	3.3	<u>Sustainable Events</u> - Deliver... Sustainable Park events and support the delivery of sustainable events held within Parks.
		Adopt the Sustainable Events Guides for all MCC events.
		Ensure all MCC funded events meet the principles of a sustainable event, aligned to the Sustainable Events Guides or other.

		Ensure all events taking place on MCC owned land meet the principles of a sustainable event, aligned to the Sustainable Events Guides or other.
		Research and assess viable opportunities to reduce carbon emissions from events held on MCC land.
3.7	3.4	Food – Provision and Production - Work towards all food in parks being procured sustainably across parks by:
		Provision: Ensure Park Cafe and vendors adopt the Council's sustainable food policy aligned with the Manchester Food Board climate change priorities
		Production: Link Allotments, growing groups, community orchards to the Sustainable Food board Climate Change priorities.
3.4	3.5	Waste - Research and assess viable opportunities within Grounds Maintenance to reduce carbon emissions by:
		Reviewing litter bin provision within parks (capital investment programme).
		Review waste generated in parks and existing recycling / disposal routes. Consider in context of waste hierarchy, changes in national waste legislation and working towards becoming a circular economy (in collaboration with Waste & Recycling Team who can support services).
		Deliver behaviour change campaigns to raise awareness of the impact of littering in parks.
		Deliver national campaigns in Parks inc. GB Spring Clean and Love Parks. Improve comms to visitors on what happens to waste.

3.2.4 Climate adaptation, carbon storage & sequestration

Main CCAP Ref	Park CCAP Ref	Actions
4.1	4.1	Tree planting - Increase the quantity of trees and hedgerows within parks by:
		Contribute to the delivery of the Manchester Tree Action Plan by investigating opportunities for planting in parks and providing tree planting sites including community orchards.
4.6		Work with City of Trees to see if the allocated tree planting sites within Parks are eligible for Trees for Climate funding.
4.2	4.2	NBS - Increase the amount of Nature Based Solutions across the parks:
		Explore funding opportunities for further NBS within Manchester's Parks including resource and their maintenance.
		Promote and support the Citywide implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) through identifying opportunities within Parks.
4.5	4.3	Biodiversity - Deliver... Improve biodiversity across the Parks by:
4.5		Support the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, linked to the Local Plan and Biodiversity Net Gain offer for the City.
4.5		Building on the differential mowing schedule across MCC Parks to increase biodiversity and support pollinators.
		Reduce the use of glyphosate in parks.

3.2.5 Influencing behaviour change & being a catalyst for change

Main CCAP Ref	Park CCAP Ref	Actions
5.1	5.1	<u>Carbon Literacy Training</u> - Ensure all Parks staff are carbon literate and understand how to embed carbon reduction measures and climate action into their working lives.
		Ensure a minimum of 50% Parks staff are Carbon Literacy certified as part of the wider MCC CLT Gold commitment.
5.1		Bespoke training: Explore how Parks staff can embed the learnings from CLT into their work roles.
5.2	5.2	<u>Influence Park funding</u> - Embed Zero Carbon within Parks decision making to:
		Ensure revenue generated from Parks is being invested effectively in line with the zero carbon agenda.
		Ensure all Parks grant programmes positively address climate change.
5.3	5.3	<u>Community Engagement</u> - Support delivery of citywide climate change community engagement approaches, working with internal stakeholders such as Neighbourhoods Officers, Keep Manchester Tidy and Climate Change Delivery Officers to:
		Identify opportunities in Parks to engage with residents and community groups in alignment with climate action in ward plans and the MCCA <u>In Our Nature</u> programme.
5.7	5.4	<u>Learning & Skills</u> - Encourage schools, other education settings to use parks for Climate Change educational sessions by:
		Continuing to engage and deliver climate change activities with young people through the Youth Council and schools. Explore how Parks can support Manchester's Eco Schools.
		Develop Community Learning environments- e.g. Forest Schools/Rain Gardens/Wildflower meadows.
5.4	5.5	<u>Zero Carbon Communications</u> -Support and contribute to the delivery of the citywide Zero Carbon Communications Strategy by:
		Work with Parks team to generate Parks related content for zero carbon & climate change messages.
		Embed zero carbon and climate change messages into all Parks related communications campaigns.

4.0 Building on Strengths

4.1 The CCAP recognises that climate change is embedded within some aspects of the Parks Service and that this provides a positive position to launch from.

4.2 Buildings and energy

- Options for decarbonisation are embedded in capital development, recent examples include the installation of photovoltaic panels in the development

of the accessible changing facilities at Wythenshawe Park and replacement lighting on the athletics track converted to LED's.

4.3 Transport and travel

- The fleet utilised to deliver the service is adapting with electric vehicles, e-cargo bikes and bikes successfully utilised as alternatives to internal combustion engine vehicles.
- Publicly accessible EV charging is in place at Heaton Park.
- Supporting active travel for staff and visitors through the removal of barriers and the improvement and creation of safe routes, recent examples include the removal of barriers at Chorlton Water Park and the installation of the family trail at Wythenshawe Park.

4.4 Consumption, Emissions and Suppliers

- Procurement of goods and services – ensuring 10% environmental weighting is included into contracts.
- Park Café's are using degradable products such as food containers and packaging, cups, drink stirrers and cutlery in place of single use plastics. One operator has adopted cardboard packaging for water in place of plastic bottles and all operators will provide access to drinking water to refill bottles.
- Restrictions on the use of SUP's have been included within vendor licenses, this was first trialled with ice cream providers and remains under close scrutiny.
- Feasibility work is underway to reduce the use of generated power at events in favour of linking into the grid. Good progress has also been made with event organisers to source alternatives to commonly used single use plastics such as barrier tape in favour of more sustainable products.
- Review of bonfire and firework events in parks, resulting in a decision to not reinstate events post pandemic for 2022.
- A programme to replace bins that have reached the end of their life with larger capacity bins (where appropriate) is in place, thus supporting a reduction in the number of bin collections. All recyclable waste collected from Parks is separated at the plant and recycled, the remaining general waste is incinerated at a waste to energy plant.

4.5 Climate adaptation, carbon storage & sequestration

- 385 new trees and 1,287 new hedging trees have been planted in Parks since 2020.
- Reduced mowing operations in River Valley and Urban Countryside sites with support from stakeholders to enhance biodiversity.
- No general glyphosate based treatments have been used to manage weeds in Parks since 2019. The treatment of Japanese Knotweed and occasionally Giant Hogweed are the only works using glyphosate based products, this is a limited programme as most outbreaks have been eradicated through a citywide treatment programme.

- Allotment societies have removed the sale of glyphosate based products from site shops. Many ploholders have moved away from the use of chemicals for the control of weeds, insects and diseases.

4.6 Influencing behaviour change & being a catalyst for change

- A bespoke approach to the delivery of Carbon Literacy Training has been developed, this has supported the Team to learn together and work through material that supports the application of themes in their daily activity.
- Sharing and amplification of good practise and the achievements of staff, volunteers and partners through social media and specialist communications.
- Developing and delivering partnership events and activities to support active travel, reducing littering, connection with nature and green learning environments such as forest schools.

5.0 Conclusion and next steps

5.1 The Parks CCAP is in the final phase of development ahead of the target to go live with delivery on 1st April 2023. This phase has focused on finalising the ambition with the workstream leads from the main CCAP and identifying key performance indicators and measures that will allow progress to be tracked.

5.2 The delivery phase of the action plan will require a focus on:

- Continuing to identify good practise that is already in place and finding ways to replicate and embed so it becomes 'business as usual'.
- Learning from the experience of other industry professionals associated with landscape management, heritage and conservation and visitor / stakeholder engagement.
- Ensuring that where changes in the delivery of services are made that these are communicated in full, including what the changes will look like, how staff, volunteers and partners can get involved and above all the benefit of why a change has been made.

5.3 The governance structure for the delivery of the plan links the lead for the workstream in the main CCAP to a lead officer in the Parks Team. Overall responsibility for the delivery of the Plan is aligned to the Parks Lead.

5.4 The immediate next steps will concentrate on settling the reporting mechanism for the plan and sharing the ambition ready for launch. It is anticipated that progress against the action plan will be updated quarterly with an annual report tabled at the Zero Carbon Coordination Group.