

Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee – End of Year Summary 2022/2023

The Committee and the wider Council recognise that climate change is an urgent and immediate priority for our residents in our city and the planet. It is our responsibility to take action.

In recognition of the need to take action, the Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and then developed a Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25, which was approved by Executive in March 2020. This plan sets out the actions to be taken by the Council to reduce our own direct carbon emissions. The Committee have received regular quarterly update reports on the progress against each of the actions within the plan. All six of the Council's Scrutiny Committees are committed to including the impact on climate as part of their remits, throughout the year. During the course of the year committee members attended other committee meetings as they discussed a wide range of matters such as the impact of the heatwave on health, food policy, and work on the climate in our schools.

Manchester City Council's Climate Change Plan has been rated one of the strongest of any local authority by campaigning organisation Climate Emergency UK. Their analysis put the Council's Climate Change Action Plan third best out of 409 UK local authorities – the highest placed metropolitan council – with a score of 87%. The average score across all local authorities was 46%.

The Council also works hard to influence other key players across the city to also recognise the impact of their operation and also play their part in reducing emissions. Responsibility for developing and coordinating the citywide strategy to fulfil the commitment made that 'Manchester will play its full part in limiting the impacts of climate change' was devolved to the Manchester Climate Change Partnership and Manchester Climate Change Agency. The Committee continue to receive regular progress reports on their important work to ensure all partners across the city take the required actions to reduce emissions in line with the Carbon Budget that has been set for the city. The Committee will continue to review progress on the delivery of this programme over the coming municipal year.

An important area of activity, both to address the climate crisis and to benefit our citizens as the cost of energy rises so rapidly is in relation to housing and retrofitting. The Council's new Housing Strategy committed us to developing a Retrofit Plan for the city. The Retrofit Plan will outline the delivery of the large scale retrofit programme to ensure progress towards the 2038 target of Manchester becoming a zero-carbon city. We have considered reports on this work at our September 2022 and March 2023 meetings, and it is a subject area we will return to in the new municipal year. We have worked on this with the Economy Committee.

The Committee was also very pleased to work closely with the Economy committee on the new Active Travel strategy which came to both committees

for input and comment as it went through the consultative process and finally to Executive.

At our meeting of January 2023, the Committee were pleased to welcome representatives from the Manchester Airports Group who had been invited to discuss the relationship between aviation and the city's carbon emissions and the work that Manchester Airport have been doing to reduce the ground-based carbon impact of their activities and the work that the wider Group is doing to ensure that the UK aviation sector achieves net zero emissions by 2050. The Committee recognises that MAG seeks to be a leader in this field and has done much positive work but is not convinced that the Government's Jet Zero Strategy, or indeed current international aviation sector policy, is compatible with the Paris agreement. The Committee will continue to press MAG to press for stronger action within the entire aviation sector.

At our meeting of 10 November 2022, we considered a report titled 'Update on the Role of Neighbourhood Teams in developing local climate change activity and partnership working'. This report contained updated information in relation to ward level Climate Change Action Plans. Following consideration of this report the Members agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to consider SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) actions and the general measuring and reporting of outcomes of these ward level climate change action plans. The final report and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group will be reported to the Committee in the new municipal year when they have concluded their work.

Over the previous 12 months the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee, in addition to the above and to regular quarterly progress reports, has also examined many areas of interest to Members including Biodiversity, Planning Policy; waste and recycling; the Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy; Single Use Plastics, Manchester Green and Blue Strategy and Implementation Plan and the work of the Council's Culture Team in responding to the climate emergency.

The Chair and the Committee wish to thank all invited guests and officers for attending meetings throughout the course of the year and contributing so constructively to the work of the Committee.