

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 17 July 2024

Subject: Update: Education Climate Change Action Plan 2022-24

Report of: Strategic Director - Children and Education Services

Summary

In 2022, Manchester's Education Services delivered a successful 'Bee Green' Conference for education settings. Subsequently, working in partnership with Manchester's settings, a strategic approach centred on 4Cs (Campus, Culture, Community and Curriculum) has been adopted to shape a coherent delivery plan. This will enable children to learn and contribute to a 'greener' environment, making a positive contribution to Manchester's Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). This report provides an update on work done by the Council to support the Education sector with decarbonisation since the previous update on this work, which was presented to this committee in June 2023. It also outlines the plans for this work moving forwards at a time when both the citywide CCAP and that of Education services are due for refreshment. This work has and will continue to play an important role in Manchester's bid to become a UNICEF child-friendly city. Please note the word 'setting' is used to include all education providers including Early Years, schools, colleges, alternative and training providers and supplementary schools.

Recommendations

1. Members to note and comment on the report.
 2. Members to support the work of settings where appropriate to engage with this work by developing and implementing action plans to reduce their carbon emissions.
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Wards Affected: All

<p>Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city</p>	<p>Focus of the report.</p>
<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments</p>	<p>This action plan is applicable to all children and young people of early years, school and college age and their settings' community and does not distinguish specific actions for protected or disadvantaged groups. Where relevant, reasonable adjustments are made to include all young people.</p> <p>This is due to the initial two-year period being focused on understanding the status of education settings more broadly and engaging them with this agenda; providing over-arching and more definitive support for identified settings of concern before moving into more nuanced KPIs, partly informed by the Manchester Climate Change Action Plan, as the Education specific plan is refreshed bi-yearly as 2038 approaches.</p> <p>The refreshed audit will also enable support to be targeted at schools who are struggling most based on their self-assessment.</p>

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Equip children and young people with the skills and behaviours to prepare them for the green economy.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Raise awareness, build capacity and skills across the workforce to implement change.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Improve pathways of leadership and activism for young people and access to decision makers.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Increase the impact of the offer from MCC to education settings.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Increased carbon literacy amongst young people will contribute to a greener city in future.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

£20,000 from Zero Carbon reserves

Financial Consequences – Capital

N/A

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1.0 Background/Context

- 1.1 A report was brought to this Committee in June 2023 to update on the Education Climate Change Action Plan (ECCAP) 2022-24 (Appendix 1). This report will provide the committee with an update on progress to date, as well as future opportunities and intentions for this scheme of work, with the plan due for a refresh this summer.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 In 2022, Education services developed a strategic climate change action plan to support the sector in reducing carbon emissions and in developing sustainable environments, contributing to MCC's overall climate change action plan and to reaching the city's zero carbon target of 2038. The initial plan focused on a two-year period, which will end this summer and be refreshed, in line with bi-annual refreshes as 2038 approaches. The current action plan has focused on four workstreams, the four Cs: **Campus, Culture, Community and Curriculum**. Each has had an overarching objective to provide a focus of activity, ensuring tangible and impactful outcomes were achieved:

- **Campus-** Having a positive impact on the school's grounds and operations.
- **Culture-** Changing attitudes and encouraging more sustainable choices.
- **Community-** involving individuals within and beyond the school community.
- **Curriculum-** Teaching students and the school community about climate change and sustainability.

- 2.2 All 4 Cs are linked to the 5 workstreams in the city's overall climate change action plan, so cross-departmental collaboration has been and will continue to be key as the plan is refreshed.

3.0 Climate Change Action Plan- Progress to date

This section of the report describes the progress that has been made towards the completion of actions under each of the four Cs.

3.1 Campus

- 3.1.1 One key 'Campus' target was for all education settings to have started a climate action plan by July 2024. 73 Manchester schools (39%) have used the Transform Our World Action Planning tool to date. The number of Manchester schools with a climate action plan is significantly higher, partly as several schools have used different models, like Eco-Schools' 'Count your Carbon' tool. This is the first School specific carbon calculator (though can also be used by nurseries and colleges), enabling users to calculate their school's carbon footprint. The tool then provides tailored recommendations for ways to reduce this figure. Local authority users will be added to the school's profile, providing sight of the data, which will be key for future priorities of the Governance Review Board (3.2.4). The added element of the specific data and the

resulting ability to measure impact means this tool will be the preferred model for school climate action plans in future. In February 2024, a new eco-schools officer was appointed in waste and recycling services, with responsibility for supporting existing eco-schools and increasing the number of schools involved in the programme. Part of the programme involves using the 'Count Your Carbon' tool, so there is an expectation the number of schools with a climate action plan will increase as a direct result of this new role. To date, the number who have used the 'Count your Carbon' model since its launch in February stands at five.

- 3.1.2 Several Early Years settings have been engaged in this work since the June 2023 report, with a number engaging in the green schools network **(3.1.4)**. To increase the number of those with action plans, some short training has been co-produced with daycare settings and childminders. This was rolled out to 25 daycare settings and 45 childminders at forum meetings in June 2024, detailing key climate actions settings could take. 5 Post-16 settings have also engaged with the green schools network since inception, with representatives from Loreto and Connell Sixth forms also sitting on the Governance Review Board **(3.2.4)**. Key contacts have been identified for the establishment of a post-16 working group, which will likely commence in September 2024. Both pieces of work will contribute to the key target of all education settings having a climate action plan.
- 3.1.3 Another 'Campus' target is for all wards to make two commitments to improving active travel to education settings. Ward level climate action plans have sections on young people and transport, with various commitments including increasing the number of schools involved in the green schools network **(3.1.4)**. One of the 2024 network meetings focused on active travel, including examples and a presentation from Transport for Greater Manchester outlining what support is available. This includes Livings Streets' WOW programme, which encourages pupils to log their journeys to school. Six Manchester schools have taken up a funded place on the WOW programme. The re-launch of the Green Bee Relay **(3.3.5)** has also been key to supporting this target, with all schools signing up also being registered on Modeshift STARS, a platform funded by TfGM which supports settings to create travel plans.
- 3.1.4 The third 'Campus' target was for the settings with the lowest scores in each area of the audit to have risen from red to amber by July 2023. Data from a survey sent out in September 2023 reveals 81% of those who scored red for a topic had reached at least amber by September 2023. All those who were still red for those areas have been offered direct support since in the form of a tailored one-page directory of resources, information and advice. The action plan also contained a target for those settings to have reached green by July 2024. Some of these had already done so by July 2023. Part of the rationale for using this self-scoring was the lack of carbon footprint tool to measure impact. The introduction of an appropriate tool removes the need to use the self-scoring system, with schools being given recommendations on reducing emissions in areas where they are highest.

3.1.5 The final 'Campus target' was for at least two locality leaders to support with the establishment of green school networks in North, Central and South Manchester. Previously, each network met half-termly to focus on one key climate change topic, sharing best practice, challenges, ideas and opportunities. For the academic year 2023/24, it was decided to merge these networks, providing a greater range of case studies. The minutes and resources from each meeting are uploaded to the schools hub (**3.34**) for those unable to attend the session. 20 schools in North Manchester (29%), 19 in Central Manchester (36%), and 26 in South Manchester (37%) have engaged in the half-termly network meetings this academic year. The new eco-schools officer will play an important role in adding to this number, with schools signing up to the programme being encouraged to join the network from September. The previous update to scrutiny outlined the provision of £15,000 for supporting this network. This has been put towards the first Green Schools Festival (**4.0**).

3.2 Culture

3.2.1 The first 'Culture' target was for 50% of all education settings to engage in Carbon Literacy Training by July 2024. A session covering the science of climate change and how to act in schools and colleges was created in recognition of not all settings being able to commit to the 8 hours of Carbon Literacy training. This was delivered to 50 members of staff at Prospect House Specialist Support School in September 2023. It was also delivered to 10 staff from 6 different settings in December 2023. A further session advertised to staff from multiple settings is due to take place as part of the Green Schools Festival. As seen in **3.11**, similar training has been developed for Early Years settings. This will also be rolled out to all members of staff at Kids Start nursery in July 2024. The offer to do so for free for a full staff cohort is open to any other interested setting. In addition to this, a full session of Carbon Literacy Training for Educators will take place in July 2024. This is aimed at staff, committed parents/carers and governors. Settings who participate will subsequently achieve their Carbon Literate Educator Award.

3.2.2 The second 'Culture' target was for everyone in MCC's Children's Directorate to complete the e-learning Carbon Literacy Training by July 2024. This target has been revised to be everyone in the Education teams to have completed their full carbon literacy training. At present, the number of staff who have completed the training stands at 35%. New staff members complete carbon literacy training as standard, so work with the Zero Carbon Workforce lead will continue and focus on existing staff yet to receive the training.

3.2.3 Another 'Culture' target was the implementation and evaluation of a climate action planning pilot. Of the initial 15 selected, only four carried on with this due to competing priorities. They created climate action plans using the Transform Our World School Climate Action Planner and continue to be supported by the Project Manager to complete the actions in these plans. These actions have included successful bids for cycle storage, work with the MCC's energy management unit to reduce usage, and partnership working with City of trees to plant trees. £5000 was drawn from the Zero Carbon

Reserves to support this agenda, and part of this was used to enrol the four schools in the Zero Carbon Schools programme, which supports each to embed climate change into the whole school curriculum. These schools will continue with the programme into the next academic year. Another fifteen schools have been identified as needing support with the creation of a climate action plan, with 5 from each locality. They will use the new 'Count your Carbon' tool (3.11) to get a baseline figure, then the project manager will support them to carry out the recommendations which follow, as well as connecting them to their neighbourhood officer and any local groups which may be able to support.

3.2.4 The final 'Culture' target was the establishment of a Governance Review Board. Its members are the leading settings from the original locality networks, who have already completed the easier steps of their climate action plans. As such, they can discuss the feasibility of projects with the largest potential to reduce emissions. New settings can join the board's founding members when they are identified as making considerable progress on climate action. New members for this year are Longsight Community Primary and Beaver Road Primary. There have been two board meetings this academic year, one on sustainable procurement and the other looking at a review of the energy management unit's service level agreement with schools. The procurement meeting resulted in an agreement to develop a sustainable food charter for settings. Full guidance will be developed alongside a sustainable food charter for the city. In the meantime, a workshop supporting school caterers to increase the number of plant-based meals was delivered as part of the Green Schools Festival (4.0). The SLA review resulted in the development of a user guide for schools, which will support them to understand historical energy usage and pinpoint areas with excessive use. This will be uploaded to the schools hub (3.43) leading to more schools reducing their energy usage. Future meetings will continue to complement the network's work, with board topics and discussions informing network agendas.

3.3 Community

3.3.1 The first 'Community' target was about utilising schools as a key community hub, involving the wider community in climate initiatives. The climate change neighbourhood officers (CCNOs) continue to be a key part of this work, attending network (3.14) and board (3.24) meetings, as well as being linked to settings who the project manager works with directly. As mentioned in 3.12, all new ward climate plans have a commitment regarding young people. The CCNOs are the experts in neighbourhood level climate action, and they support Neighbourhood officers to deliver the ward level plans, which are a priority in the Neighbourhoods Teams' Service Plan. This means there are many climate projects involving multiple schools taking place across the city. One such project in Withington and Fallowfield involves 12 schools. Each has been involved in a climate change project linked to various themes. A film showcasing the work will be published soon. The previous scrutiny report referenced a map of green and blue spaces, which has now been made available to all settings, facilitating greater use of those spaces by young people. In addition, this mapping tool was used to identify school sites

appropriate for tree planting. MCC are working with City of Trees, who are conducting feasibility studies on these before potentially planting. This objective will also be supported by the introduction of Climate Ambassadors. Coordinated by Manchester Metropolitan University, this will match up willing volunteers with climate expertise and knowledge to school seeking support with practical climate projects or educational pieces.

- 3.3.2 Another key part of this work is MCC's partnership with Improveasy, who are delivering free energy efficiency upgrades for residential properties across the city. Depending on the suitability of the property, this includes insulation, heat pumps and solar panels. There are various eligibility routes to receipt of these upgrades, including the child being on free school meals. This scheme is being promoted to parents and carers through schools, and for every referral made via the school which leads to installation, the school receives £500.
- 3.3.3 The next 'Community' target was to ensure all settings are incorporated into ward plans by July 2024. This has been covered in the previous point and in **3.1.2**.
- 3.3.4 Another 'Community' target was the creation of Skills for Life Climate Change Champions. Pupils from 10 different settings attended three climate education sessions across 2023, each session with a different climate theme. The feedback from the session was positive, however the programme did not provide a clear channel for young people to drive projects. The essence of Manchester's bid to being a UNICEF child-friendly city is having young people's voices at the heart of policy. The discovery phase of the CFC application, with thousands of young people consulted, highlighted a clear focus on greater climate action. As such, the Champions programme is being reframed and re-launched as School Climate Assemblies, starting in September 2024. This also forms a key part of the UNICEF Action Plan. Adapting the University of Manchester's innovative 'School Citizen Assembly' approach, pupils will explore climate change through engagement with experts and researching different themes. Once an initial idea is submitted, groups will be supported by the Project Manager and the University to develop headline actions into a project proposal. Pupils will debate these ideas, before a top 18 projects are shortlisted and chosen for funding. Funding avenues are still being explored to determine the level of funding attached to each. Schools who have previously participated in the Champions programme, Zero Carbon Schools (**3.2.3**) or eco schools, can submit their ideas to ensure lots of young people are afforded this opportunity. In the first instance this will be for primary schools. If the project is successful, the same concept in other settings will be considered.
- 3.3.5 A further 'Community' target was the development of a good practice school streets toolkit, working with colleagues from neighbourhoods. This has been completed and is available to schools.
- 3.3.6 The final 'Community' target was the running of the Green Bee Relay. In 2023, Armitage Primary school were the winners of the relay, receiving £3500 which has been put towards a large project to green their grounds. They won this for

actively travelling 3500 miles as a collective. The relay has been repeated in 2024, with 15 schools signed up. For one of those who completes, the same prize will be awarded for a climate related project.

3.4 Curriculum

- 3.4.1 The first 'Curriculum' target was for half of settings to embed green jobs into careers programmes. Groundwork's 'Every Job a Green Job' toolkit is available to careers advisors and work is ongoing to update this. The information in **3.4.2** will also support with this work in future. When the ECCAP is refreshed in summer 2024, close working with Works and Skills colleagues will be key to increasing the number of setting with green jobs in their careers programmes.
- 3.4.2 The second 'Curriculum' target was for 75% of secondary school and post-16 CEIAG leads to complete carbon literacy training by July 2024. Progress in this area can largely be attributed to the actions in **3.2.1**. In addition, work is ongoing to adapt the training referenced in **3.2.1** so there is a specific version for CEIAG leads. This will be delivered during Green Careers Week in November 2024.
- 3.4.3 The final 'Curriculum' target was the promotion of resources via the schools hub. The decarbonisation and sustainability page is well established and contains information, resources and advice on the various climate change topics, as well as all the resources from the network meetings and case studies of best practice. The website is regularly updated to reflect current opportunities.

4.0 Green Schools Festival

- 4.1 As per **3.1.4**, the locality element of the Green School Network was retained for the first Green Schools Festival. Several events took place during June 2024 as part of the festival, both for staff and students. The first event was for different staff members at The East Manchester Academy, with 3 workshops happening simultaneously and covering plant-based food on school menus, sustainable site practices, and the session mentioned in **3.2.1**. Another event, the Green Schools Relay, saw the nationwide Running out of Time Relay visiting seven Manchester schools, delivering climate assemblies to raise awareness of climate change amongst staff and pupils. Another event took place at St Margaret's Primary School (Whalley Range), where pupils from 10 local primary schools were introduced to the new School Climate Assemblies (**3.3.3**) and experienced three practical climate workshops. Pupils from schools across the city explored the University of Manchester's School Citizen Assembly at Manchester Museum, engaging with climate experts and getting them to start thinking about ideas submission for the Climate Assemblies in September. Schools were also encouraged to participate in Let's Go Zero's Climate Action Countdown, with various activities for pupils and prizes on offer throughout the month.

5.0 Buildings

- 5.1 Decarbonisation of the school estate will be key to reducing the emissions of the sector. Alongside the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), MCC are supporting five schools to benefit from a collective purchase scheme for solar panels. 5.2 All 5 will be benefitting from the bulk purchase by schools across Greater Manchester, with GMCA conducting one procurement exercise. Manchester Academy and Parris Wood High School have both been successful in SALIX bids for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. This has enabled them to install heat pumps and solar panels, saving money and reducing carbon emissions. Their excellent work will be showcased at the next Governance Review Board in the hope of increasing the number of schools able to benefit from decarbonisation schemes. A bid for decarbonisation surveys of school buildings has been made, which would support this work if successful.
- 5.2 There are an increasing number of proposals to upscale decarbonisation works across schools, particularly for solar panels. We will be taking a new approach to third party solar panel arrangements, and using Claremont Primary School as a case study for when these types of proposals come in. In the first instance, we will be conducting a full decarbonisation survey. This will enable us to look at the viability of various works including solar. We will then consider all aspects of the third-party approach and the 'Powering our Schools' approach, being convened by GMCA, and compare the benefits. For whichever approach is more beneficial, the Council's legal team would need to develop an agreement with the school's governing body and the provider of the solar panels which would protect the position of the Council in relation to potential damage caused during installation, any adverse impact on the building from the fitting of solar panels, ongoing maintenance requirements of the panels and agreement on who pays any penalties or costs if solar panels were required to be removed to facilitate a re-roof or other repairs.
- 5.3 In addition, we will seek to improve active travel to school by ensuring all vacant school crossings are recruited to through a targeted recruitment campaign.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 Though not all the targets in the Action Plan have been met, significant progress has been made during the period. Despite this not being a statutory area of work, there have been good levels of engagement across projects. A good database of sustainability leads has been made and the introduction of a new eco-schools officer will complement this. Strong foundations have been laid and this presents an opportunity for Manchester's settings to reduce their carbon emissions, particularly with the 'Count your Carbon' tool available. The first ECCAP has come to an end, new objectives will be set with carbon reduction in mind, as well as the continuation of projects like the School Climate Assemblies and the Green Schools Network. The former provides an opportunity for the city's young people to drive this agenda.