

Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2024

Present:

Councillor Shilton Godwin – in the Chair

Councillors Hussain, Ilyas, Kirwin-McGinley, McCaul, Mumtaz, Razaq, Richards and Wiest

Apologies: Not applicable

Also present:

Councillor Igbon, Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods

Councillor Ahmed Ali, Deputy Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods

Councillor Rawlins, Executive Member for Clean Air, Environment and Transport

Councillor Foley, Deputy Executive Member for Clean Air, Environment and Transport

Councillor White, Executive Member for Housing and Development

ECCNSC/24/30 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 27 June 2024 and 18 July 2024 as a correct record.

ECCNSC/24/31 Manchester City Council 2020-25 Climate Change Action Plan 2023/24 Annual Report

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive that presented the fourth Annual Report of the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) 2020-25 and provided an overview of progress made during the year 2023-24.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background, noting that the five-year, science-based CCAP covering 2020-25 went live following approval by the Council's Executive in March 2020;
- Describing that the Council had made significant progress in reducing its direct carbon emissions to date and had consistently remained below the allocated carbon budget;
- CO₂ emissions related to Council buildings, streetlights, waste collection, operational fleet, and staff business travel;
- Since first reporting its carbon emissions in 2009/10, the Council had reduced its CO₂ emissions by 67%;
- In 2023/24 the Council's target was to emit less than 21,562 tCO₂. The Council had exceeded its allocated CO₂ emissions target for the year 2023/24 by 1494 tCO₂ (7%) by emitting a total of 23,056 tCO₂ over the year;

- This was the first year within the current CCAP period where Manchester City Council (MCC) had seen an annual increase in emissions;
- Reporting that the increase in emissions was largely due to the UK National Grid increasing the amount of natural gas and coal used in the production of national electricity over the last year, something which was out of the Council's control;
- To date, 75.5% of the 5-year CO2 emissions limit (The Carbon Budget) had been used, with one year of CCAP delivery remaining;
- To remain within the CO2 emissions target for the five-year period, MCC aimed to emit no more than 31,173tCO2 during 2024/25;
- In the past four years of the current MCC CCAP delivery, the Council had not emitted more than 25,501 tCO2 in any one year. Therefore, unless there was a significant further change in carbon levels within the national energy supply, it was expected that the Council would successfully meet the science-based target for the 2020-25 CCAP period;
- Describing key achievements to date; and
- Next steps and the development of the 2025-30 Climate Change Action Plan.

The Committee was invited to comment on the report before its submission to the Executive on 16 October 2024.

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

- Noting that the emissions target for this year had not been met and noting the urgency of climate change;
- Manchester City Council had a responsibility to lead on this issue and be an example of best practice in addressing climate change;
- Recognising the challenges in future years to reduce emissions;
- Noting emissions related to Council owned buildings and would the Power Purchase Agreement assist in reducing these carbon emissions;
- Discussing the approach to developing the 2025/30 CCAP and enquiring if the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research were involved with this; and
- Were records maintained to understand the levels of Carbon Literacy undertaken by staff, was this training mandatory for staff and was the impact of this training evaluated.

The Strategic Lead, Resources & Programmes said that it was understood that the next five year plan would be challenging, however the Council would not shy away from this. He said that the urgency and importance of the climate crisis was understood and drove the work articulated in the report and would inform future CCAPs. He said the 2025/30 CCAP was being worked on to ensure this was deliverable and that a progress report would be presented to the Committee at the January 2025 meeting. He said that the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research science-based targets are being followed, and that the Tyndall Centre were consulted when needed however he noted that they were a research centre and their capacity to support the 2025/30 CCAP was limited. He said that the 2025/30 CCAP would be subject to external validation to ensure the projections for 2025/30 were appropriate. He said that the continued roll out of an electrified fleet would contribute to reducing the Council's direct emissions, adding that it was important to consider the suitability and affordability of such vehicles. He commented that the delivery of

the Manchester City Council Power Purchase Agreement would assist the Council in delivering its targets as this would provide the Council with fully renewable energy, and he added that a key target for 2025/30 would be the decarbonisation of the Civic Quarter Heat Network system. He said that the Committee would be receiving a report on the Power Purchase Agreement at the December meeting.

The Strategic Lead, Resources & Programmes discussed the issue of staff travel, noting that analysis and a benchmarking exercise would be undertaken to understand the new normal post-pandemic. The Chair requested that an update on staff travel be provided in the next quarterly CCAP report.

The Deputy Chief Executive addressed the 2025/30 CCAP and acknowledged the challenge to continue to reduce the city's emissions and build on the good progress achieved to date. He said that all levers of influence would be used to secure funding to deliver this activity.

The Zero Carbon Manager, City Policy said that Carbon Literacy training was mandatory and records of this were maintained by HROD. She said that analysis as to the impact of this training and resulting behaviour change would be undertaken. The Deputy Executive Member for Clean Air, Environment and Transport commented that research had shown the positive impact Carbon Literacy had in regard to behaviour change. The Deputy Chief Executive commented that consideration would also be given as to how this could be incorporated into staff surveys that would be undertaken across all Council staff.

Decision

To note the report.

ECCNSC/24/32 Housing Retrofit

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director, Growth and Development that provided an update on the Council's proposals to decarbonise the city's housing, incorporating an update on Green Skills, and providing an opportunity for members to contribute to and influence these policy areas.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background;
- Discussion of Social Housing including Council owned properties;
- General approach and investment for the future in our owned and managed housing;
- Council owned properties managed via Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts;
- Investing in Heat Networks;
- Private Sector Housing;
- Activity targeted at vulnerable/low-income households;
- Activity targeted at willing to pay households;
- Activity targeted at all residents;
- Cross tenure approaches and area-based schemes;
- Research projects and the projects with the Carbon Co-Op;

- Resident engagement activity;
- Work and Skills, including progress/outcomes with Zero Carbon Skills Group;
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) work;
- National work;
- Funding considerations;
- The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) Funded Accelerator Project;
- Developing a Retrofit Plan;
- Monitoring and reporting; and
- Conclusions.

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

- Noting that the funding arrangements to deliver the scale of retrofitting required across the city was complex;
- A summary of delivery against targets would assist Members understand how Manchester was performing;
- Comparative performance data against other core cities would be useful in future reports;
- When would a Retrofit Strategy be made available;
- Consideration needed to be given by report authors to the use of acronyms in future update reports;
- Would the Greater Manchester Trailblazer Devolution Deal present opportunities to deliver retrofit work at a greater scale;
- Retrofitting needed to be considered in terms of social and climate justice;
- What was the approach to the Private Rented Sector;
- Decent Homes Standards and Retrofitting works should be delivered at the same time to reduce disruption and reduce costs;
- Requestion information on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) and the reported challenges of cost inflation;
- Future reports should include examples of lessons learned; and
- Did Manchester have a skilled workforce to deliver the scale of work required.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development stated that the issue of retrofitting was understood in the wider context of social justice, economic and health benefits for residents. He said the Devolution Deal would support local initiatives and align funding streams. He said the ambition for the city was clearly articulated and he would continue to lobby the Government for appropriate levels of funding to deliver this ambition. He said that the intention was to scale up this activity across all different tenures. With specific reference to the Private Rented Sector, he said that Selective Licensing was one tool that could be used to raise standards in that sector and made reference to the boiler upgrade scheme that was available, the retrofit portal and ongoing resident engagement. He acknowledged the request for a summary of delivery against targets and comparisons to other core cities. He made reference to the GMCA portal that residents could access that provided a wealth of information and advice on the topic of retrofitting. He further noted the comment made in regard to the use of acronyms in future update reports.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development addressed the issue of skills by making reference to the GMCA funded Retrofit Academy, however commented that further investment in this area of activity was needed. The Assistant Director of Strategic Housing stated that the Work and Skills Team were working with relevant stakeholders, including education and training establishments and the construction industry to progress this agenda, adding that currently the construction industry and the existing labour market in Manchester was under a lot of pressure to deliver schemes due to the significant scale of development witnessed across the city, making it difficult to attract staff to be retrained and upskill.

The Strategic Director, Growth & Development acknowledged the previous comments and added that the detail of the Devolution Deal was being worked through. In regard to cost inflation and the SHDF she said that properties had been identified to receive both Decent Homes works, and Retrofitting works at the same time to minimise disruption, however the detailed survey work undertaken had identified urgent remedial work were required that resulted in increased costs. The Assistant Director of Strategic Housing commented that internal Audit had been asked to undertake a review of these SHDF properties.

The Assistant Director of Strategic Housing informed the Committee that the formal strategy would be presented to the March meeting, advising that to date the priority had been on delivery.

The Chair, in concluding this item of business, stated that the Committee recognised the scale and complexity of the challenge described and the amount of work undertaken to date. She requested that in advance of the March meeting when this subject was to be reconsidered that a private briefing session on this subject area be arranged for Members of the Committee.

Decision

To note the report.

[Councillor Shilton Godwin declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest as she had engaged the services of Your Home, Better as an owner occupier.]

ECCNSC/24/33 Draft Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director, Growth and Development that provided an overview of the updated Manchester Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Strategy.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background;
- Reporting that the revised Manchester EV Strategy defined the role of Manchester City Council (MCC) in delivering EV infrastructure for both the public and residents;
- This revision reflected advancements in technology, central Government policy developments and a broader range of charging options for residents and included

how the council would assist in supporting the commercial rollout of EV charging infrastructure;

- Describing the main aims and objectives of this strategy to assist the transition to cleaner vehicles;
- Describing the activities that MCC had undertaken during the last 12 months and the continuing work to deliver the strategy; and
- Describing the actions that the council had undertaken to progress improving resident accessibility and upcoming action for improving charging infrastructure.

The Committee was invited to comment on the report before its submission to the Executive on 16 October 2024.

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

- Welcoming the report and thanking the Executive Member and officers for reflecting and incorporating the views of the Committee following previous discussions on this subject area;
- The cost to residents of charging vehicles;
- EV Charging should be accessible to all and provision should be fair and equitable;
- Pavements needed to be free from obstructions, noting the detrimental impact this could have on disabled residents and the visually impaired;
- The need to promote and increase the use of car club schemes;
- Planning Policy should be used to maximise the provision of domestic EV charging points when planning permissions were granted; and
- Requesting that the locations of the 49 council owned car parks referred to in the report be circulated to Councillors for the purposes of inviting further suggestions to ensure there is wide and equitable coverage citywide.

The Principal Policy Officer said that the Council had little or no control over the cost of charging as this was a commercial entity, adding that the private providers would be seeking to recoup costs incurred due to installation and ongoing maintenance. She further added that the funding available to the Council was not intended to be used to subsidise the cost of charging vehicles. The Assistant Director of Infrastructure and Environment said that all options and levers of influence were being used with the sector to influence infrastructure delivery and costs.

The Principal Policy Officer said that consideration was given to the impact on pavements and added that they worked closely with the Highways Department to minimise the impact of any scheme. She said that MCC had recently published guidance supporting the use of cable mats and were developing a scheme for the installation of cable gullies where residents could safely and legally park on the roadside outside their home, adding that the Council's main priority was to support those residents who were unable to access a home charger through the expansion of the public charging network. She also made reference to the existing car sharing club scheme that existed in the city and the intention was to electrify this fleet. With regard to Planning and associated conditions, she drew the Committee's attention to appendix 5 of the strategy where this was detailed.

Decision

The Committee endorse the recommendation that Executive approve the Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy.

ECCNSC/24/34 Overview of the Trading Standards Team

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) that provided information on the activity undertaken by the Trading Standards Team (TS) which was part of the Compliance and Enforcement Service.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background to the service;
- Information relating to key areas of demand;
- Specific information in relation to the following areas of activity:
 - Consumer Safety
 - Fair Trading
 - Trademarks
 - Animal Health and animal related activity
 - Illicit Tobacco and Illegal Vapes
 - Underage Sales
 - Weights and Measures (Metrology)
- Discussion of challenges and future initiatives.

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

- Recognising the breadth and range of important work undertaken by the Team to protect the residents of Manchester;
- Welcoming the very informative report;
- How many staff were employed in the Team;
- Paying tribute to the detection dogs;
- Noting Operation Vulcan in the Bury New Road area of the city to tackle counterfeit goods;
- Discussing the proliferation of illegal vapes and the needed for more to be done to address the harms caused by these;
- Could detection dogs be used to locate illegal vapes, noting that the issue of Spice in vapes had been reported in other areas of the country and the significant harm this had on children and young people;
- All available powers and levers should be used to tackle illegal vapes; and
- Online and cyber fraud.

The Head of Compliance Enforcement and Community Safety stated that the issues associated with the Bury New Road area had emerged over a significant number of years. She said that Operation Vulcan had been established to respond to this in a wholesale, coordinated and multi-agency manner. She said that significant resources had been successfully deployed to deliver this operation and maximise the impact. She said this was only achievable through genuine partnership working, across all relevant agencies and the sharing of intelligence. The Committee were informed that any goods seized were responsibly disposed of and were not sent to landfill.

In response to the discussion regarding illegal vapes, the Neighbourhood Manager – Environmental Health, Trading Standards & Housing said new legislation regarding disposable vapes was anticipated, however the national approach to associated paraphernalia, such as the sale and marketing of e-cigarette liquids was to be determined. She said that Trading Standards continued to seize illegal vapes (those that exceeded the accepted number of puffs), noting that any subsequent legislation could see an increase in illegal vapes and the service remained vigilant to this. She further said that there had been no incidents of Spice in vapes reported in Manchester, however again the service remained vigilant to this, and this would also be an issue for Greater Manchester Police. She stated that currently the detection dogs could only identify illicit tobacco, however training of detecting dogs to identify illegal vapes was underway. In regard the to size of the team she advised that there were seven officers and four qualified Trading Standards officers, commenting that the recruitment and retention of fully qualified Trading Standards officers was a national issue. In response to the discussion regarding online and cyber fraud she said that this was often perpetrated by international criminals and the GMP had a dedicated e-crime unit and had the skills and resources to investigate those types of crime.

The Neighbourhood Team Lead said that, where appropriate, the licences of operators could be revoked if there were breaches of the Councils four Licensing objectives (The prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance, and the protection of children from harm), noting that this would be a decision for the relevant Licensing Committee. In response to a direct request, she said that examples of where this had occurred would be provided outside of the meeting.

The Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods paid tribute to all officers working within the team. She said that the harm associated with illegal vapes was clearly understood and Public Health and Children's Department worked closely together with colleagues in Trading Standards to coordinate a response to this. She further said that the response to this issue also included wider partners as the sale of illegal vapes was connected to organised criminality.

Decision

To note the report.

ECCNSC/24/35 Fly-tipping and Keep Manchester Tidy

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) that provided an update on work being undertaken to reduce fly-tipping; describing how the activity contributes to protecting the environment. This report also includes an update on the work of Keep Manchester Tidy. This includes an update on the Intensive Neighbourhood Management Pilots delivered to tackle intense passageway waste issues.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background and consideration of the Our Manchester Strategy and the focus on 'Clean and Green';
- Noting that the Clean and Green Board would provide a vehicle to develop, deliver and monitor a workplan which delivered against the 'Clean and Green' priority for the next iteration of the Our Manchester strategy;
- Describing the waste management arrangements in Manchester;
- Fly-tipping incidents data, noting that that data submitted showed that the number of fly-tipping incidents in Manchester had remained consistent over the last couple of years;
- The response to incidents of fly-tipping;
- Discussion of the current approach to reducing incidents of fly-tipping; and
- An update on the Keep Manchester Tidy (KMT) programme (April 23 – July 24) and examples of KMT Projects, noting that Tackling fly-tipping remained a key priority for KMT.

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

- Welcoming the examples provided, in particular with reference to the approach taken with businesses;
- Expressing appreciation for all the hard work undertaken by Neighbourhood Officers to address waste and flytipping;
- Recognising the good work and the positive impact Keep Manchester Tidy projects had;
- The issue of flytipping next to Household Waste and Recycling Centres;
- The issue of waste on non-Council owned land, such as the rail network and the need for these partners to address the issue of waste on their owned land;
- Are there lessons learnt from other Core Cities or neighbouring authorities to tackle flytipping;
- Could social media be used to release images of perpetrators of flytipping to discourage people from doing this and identify people guilty of this act;
- Expressing frustration with the response to reported incidents of flytipping by Biffa crews;
- Bulky collections, particularly in student areas at key periods during the term time; and
- Deeper dives of specific activities and work described in the report was required.

The Strategic Lead: Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Services said that there were many more examples of good practice and case studies that could have been included in the paper. She said that all Members received a quarterly update on enforcement activity at a ward level, in addition to the formal annual update report to Committee.

The Strategic Lead: Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Services commented that the Clean and Green Board worked with key stakeholders across the city, including Transport for Greater Manchester. She said this work enabled the sharing of good practice. She said the lobbying of private landowners would continue to encourage them to keep their land free of flytipping and align standards. Members reiterated that Network Rail needed to be engaged in this activity as they had a poor record of responding to flytipping and waste on their owned land. She noted the

comment raised regarding Waste and Recycling Centres and said that she would pass this on to Suez who operate all GM Household Waste and Recycling Centres, adding that they offer they provided was very good.

The Strategic Lead: Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Services said that analysis was undertaken to identify and tackle flytipping hotspots and examples of this approach had been provided within the report. She commented that these cases were typically related to domestic waste.

The Strategic Lead: Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Services noted the comments raised regarding the reporting of cases using the CRM system and jobs then being closed without the relevant action been taken and the frustration this led to. She said that the new reporting system that was being introduced should address the issues articulated. She commented that this improvement had been a key ask of the service as the system was developed. Delivery of this would increase accountability with the contractor and drive improvements in this aspect of service delivery. She further informed the Committee that the charging structure for resident bulky waste collections had been introduced approximately ten years ago and information on this service was available on the Council's website. In regard to specific activity and student properties she said that there was a scheme devised in conjunction with local charities and the universities to collect and recycle bulky waste at key times in the academic term and information on this approach would be shared with Members.

The Project Manager, Keep Manchester Tidy welcomed the comments from Members regarding the positive impact of locally delivered projects with residents. She commented that these had included removal of chewing gum from pavements, the removal of vape stickers from bins that had been an emerging issue and alleyway improvement schemes. She said that Keep Britain Tidy had undertaken some analysis into the behaviour of people who flytipped by interviewing perpetrators to understand their thinking. She further commented that Keep Manchester Tidy would support any resident activity, including delivery and collection of litter picking equipment. She further made reference to the positive impact of the Shaping Spaces Project that had been delivered to encourage people to change their perception, and therefore their use, of an area by hosting a series of events that showcase the potential of the space.

The Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods said that careful consideration would need to be given as to the use of social media and circulating images. She said this activity had many legal restrictions. She said the issue of flytipping had a significant impact on the Council's limited resources and this needed to be understood in the context of the previous fourteen years of cuts to the Council's budget. She said that it was important to understand the unique challenges in Manchester and noted the risks of comparing performance with neighbouring authorities, however good practice and learning was shared, both across Greater Manchester and nationally. She said the Clean and Green Board and Neighbourhood Teams were alive to the many concerns and issues articulated by the Committee, such as waste in alleyways and flats above shops and made reference to the Intensive Neighbourhood Management Pilots.

The Chair in concluding this item of business noted the comments from Members regarding the desire for deeper dives on specific aspects of the work described and she would liaise with the Executive Member to agree a way to progress this.

Decision

To note the report.

ECCNSC/24/36 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 informed the Committee that she would discuss with the Executive Member for Clean Air, Environment and Transport the appropriate meeting to schedule the Clean Air report.

Decision

The Committee notes the report and agrees the work programme.