

Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2024

Present:

Councillor Shilton Godwin – in the Chair

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

Apologies: Councillors Wiest

Also present:

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

Councillor Igbon, Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods

Councillor Ahmed Ali, Deputy Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods

Samantha Nicholson, Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency

ECCNSC/24/43 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10 October 2024 as a correct record.

ECCNSC/24/44 Annual Waste and Recycling Update

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) that provided an update on waste, recycling, and street cleansing services. The report further described how the activity contributed to the climate change agenda and key priorities for future.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background;
- Information relating to the implementation of the Resources and Waste Strategy (2018), noting that the original aim of the strategy was to drive up the country's recycling rate which had stagnated;
- Performance data across a range of activities;
- Information on the Office for Local Government (Oflog) waste metrics, a new performance body for local government to support accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government and support its improvement;
- Analysis of trends;
- Passageway collections and monitoring data;
- Passageway cleansing and standards;
- Information on the street cleansing contract and performance against a range of different settings;
- Information on the investment in waste collection and street cleansing services;

- Improvements to the street cleansing model;
- Information on communications and campaigns, including Christmas specific campaigns; and
- An update on the delivery of Social Value.

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

- Welcoming the detailed and comprehensive report;
- Had the diesel refuse collection vehicles been recycled when they were replaced with electric vehicles;
- A national approach was required in relation to soft plastic recycling;
- Welcoming the introduction of plastic pots, tubs, trays and film recycling at the kerbside;
- Discussing difficulties experienced by residents who occupied flats above shops, including knowing which bin to use that could result in contaminated bins, and where the collection points were so as to present their bins for collection;
- Missed bin collections resulting from access issues;
- Requesting data in relation to missed collections, both at a ward and city level to allow comparisons to be made;
- What monitoring had been done in relation to missed bin collections;
- Container bins not being returned to the correct location in alleyways and was this monitored;
- Was the size of the Biffa routes appropriate to meet the collection targets, noting that Biffa crews had been witnessed running to keep up with the vehicles;
- What were the financial implications of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) tax for Manchester;
- How were district centres defined and were these flexible to reflect the changing nature of neighbourhoods;
- Noting the issue of access to street cleaning vehicles as a result of parked vehicles on residential streets;
- Welcoming the use of steam cleaning in district centres and could this be extended to other areas;
- Behaviour change was very important and the need for consistent and coordinated messaging on the issue of waste and recycling, noting this should be in a range of languages and visual mediums should also be used;
- Noting the specific campaign in relation to the Christmas period and was similar consideration given to other faith festivals and celebrations;
- How could residents obtain additional caddy bags;
- A Member stated that compost created via the In-Vessel Composting facilities was available to community groups;
- Members expressed the positive response received when dealing with Biffa to resolve local issues;
- The Chair acknowledged the improvements in the cleaning of cycle lanes; and
- Acknowledging and welcoming the improvement in regard to the return of bins to pavements and spillage.

The Head of Waste, Business Units & Operations informed the Committee that the diesel vehicles had been responsibly recycled when replaced. She said she recognised the challenge presented by flats above commercial properties and

referred to the section of the report that described the activities initiated to address these. She said that Private Landlords had a responsibility to inform their tenants as to the arrangements for domestic waste collection, adding that tenants could always seek advice and information directly from the Council. She said that consideration could be given to applying stickers and recycling information being embossed into the bin containers. In relation to soft plastics, she commented that the majority of supermarkets offered a recycling service for these materials. She said that she welcomed the introduction of the ability to include plastic pots, tubs and trays in domestic recycling bins, adding that SUEZ had introduced a system to segregate and recycle these materials in the existing recycling centres. In response to a question from the Chair she confirmed that an appropriate route had been found for such materials to be recycled.

The Head of Waste, Business Units & Operations said that with regard to missed bin collections this was closely monitored, and they did work with Biffa to understand the reasons for these. She said that there were robust established arrangements to respond to missed collections and this activity was monitored through regular meetings of the Performance Contract Management Group. She said that if the issues were in relation to access, solutions would be formulated collectively by the local Neighbourhood Team, Highways and Ward Coordination. She commented that options for narrower vehicles would also be considered as part of replacing the current vehicles approaching end of life. She advised that the new dashboard that would support ward coordination would provide data in relation to missed collections. In regard to container bins and alleyways, she said that this was monitored by the Contract Monitoring Officers, who undertook regular inspections to monitor performance against the agreed standards and any issues identified would be addressed via the contract monitoring meetings with Biffa. She said that the issue of returning the containers to the frames was being addressed with Biffa but acknowledged that the condition of the surface of alleyways was a contributing factor.

The Head of Waste, Business Units & Operations stated that the health and safety of Biffa crews was paramount, and crew members should not be running to keep up with vehicles, noting the potential risk this presented. She said that the vehicles were equipped with cameras, and these were checked to ensure best practice was adopted. She said the size of the collection routes was monitored and reviewed in recognition of a growing city and the corresponding growth in demand.

The Head of Waste, Business Units & Operations commented that the financial implications for Manchester of the ETS tax was set out in the report, noting this would be the region of £4.8m per annum. She said that work continued to fully understand the implications and conversations on this topic had been escalated. She added that a briefing note on this would be provided to Members at the appropriate time. The Chair commented that this represented an additional burden on the Public Sector and supported all lobbying on this issue.

The Head of Waste, Business Units & Operations said that the Biffa crews were restricted as to the number of caddy liners they could carry, however residents could request additional liners online and these would be delivered.

The Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods noted the discussion in relation to flats above commercial properties and said that all solutions would be considered and targeted work had been prioritised in particular hotspots. She reiterated the point that the issue of missed collections was reported and closely monitored. She said the at the new dashboard would be live from January 2025 ward co-ordination. She commented that leaf removal was an issue, and she encouraged Members to engage with their local Neighbourhood Teams to address any hotspots. She further commented that the Clean and Green Board did consider behaviour change, adding that a significant amount of work had been undertaken around this issue with local housing providers across the city. The Head of Waste, Business Units & Operations referred the Committee to the report that had been submitted to the September meeting 'Fly-tipping and Keep Manchester Tidy' that detailed the range of activities at both a city and neighbourhood level on this issue. She said that information was provided in different languages, pictorial information and videos. She said that the increased waste resulting during other faith celebrations was understood however specific consideration was given to the Christmas period due to changes to collection days.

The Contract Manager (Waste) Waste Recycling and Street Cleaning stated that District Centres were defined within the Biffa contract and information on these would be circulated following the meeting for information. The Chair requested that maps of these areas would be appreciated when the information was circulated. He said that Biffa were meeting the standards as defined within the contract and if these areas were to be redefined this would require an alteration to the existing Biffa contract. He further acknowledged the comments in relation to parked cars and street cleaning and commented that the service worked with Biffa and local Neighbourhood Teams to intelligently deploy resources to address the issue. In relation to steam cleaning, he welcomed the positive comments from the Committee and said that consideration would be given to using this in other areas, noting that appropriate consideration would need to be given to access to water hydrants and the surface material of the areas to be cleaned to ensure no damage resulted due to the pressure of the steam. The Head of Waste, Business Units & Operations commented that the steam cleaning was operated on a rota system and was a welcome additional resource.

The Contract Manager (Waste) Waste Recycling and Street Cleaning noted the comments made in relation to street cleaning and the use of blowers to support the activity. He said that this activity should always be coordinated with mechanical sweepers, adding that he would pick up the specific concern articulated by a Member outside of the meeting.

The Chair, in concluding this item of business, acknowledged the significant amount of work undertaken by the team on behalf of the residents of the city and she requested that the Committee's appreciation be relayed to all staff concerned.

Decision

To note the report.

ECCNSC/24/45 Manchester's Emissions Report - Direct and Indirect Emissions Report

The Committee considered the report of the Manchester Climate Change Agency that provided a summary of the most recent Manchester's Emissions Report which had been published by Manchester Climate Change Agency (MCCA). It covered the city's direct, energy-related emissions data for 2022, along with a provisional forecast for 2023, and was based on the latest data released by the UK Government's Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background;
- Noting that the city's science-based targets were to reach zero carbon by 2038 whilst staying within a fixed carbon budget;
- The carbon budget was to emit no more than 15million tonnes between 2018 and 2100;
- There was a time lag on the data meaning that the most up-to-date information was for direct emissions for 2022, and for indirect emissions (which was new analysis) was for 2021;
- Information and consideration of Manchester's Direct Emissions for 2022;
- Information and consideration of Manchester's Indirect Emissions for 2022; and
- Noting that this year's reports were designed in a digital, interactive format, intended to make data and insights more accessible and engaging.

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

- How were aviation emissions reported and accounted for;
- Noting that the report was very detailed, with a high-level data and that the Committee may wish to explore particular aspects of this at a future meeting; and
- Noting that collectively the city was failing to meet its emissions target and how did this compare to other cities.

The Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency informed the Committee that the online report had been designed to allow the reader to filter data and be more interactive compared to a standard report. She commented that a report on indirect emissions would be produced in a similar digital and interactive format. She said that additional work was planned to use the data to help identify opportunities and levers to influence change and the Committee would be kept informed of this work. She advised that aviation emissions were not included in the city's direct emissions carbon budget as they were included within the UK carbon budget. She stated that the airport and aviation emissions was fully acknowledged as important and noted that the Committee would be receiving a report on the airport and aviation emissions at the meeting scheduled for 13 February 2025.

The Chair welcomed the attention given to understanding indirect emissions, noting that this was an issue raised previously by the Committee in discussions. She commented that a report on indirect emissions would be scheduled for the next municipal year.

The Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency expressed caution when comparing progress against other cities as not all had adopted a science-based

carbon budget. She reminded the Committee that the city's science-based carbon budget to stay within 15million tonnes of CO2 between 2018 and 2100 and to reach zero carbon by 2038 at the latest had been established and agreed in consultation with the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, adding that this was a fair and equitable slice of the global challenge. She said that regular meetings between core cities were convened, and good practice and lessons learnt were shared. She said that there was action required at a local, regional and national level to address climate change and the urgency of the issue was understood if the targets were to be met. She commented that work continued to review and map the strategy, explore all funding opportunities and initiatives to deliver the emissions target set for city.

The Executive Member for Clean Air, Environment and Transport reiterated that the urgency and need to take action at scale to address climate change was clearly understood. She said that the Council as an organisation had made significant progress in reducing its own emissions and continued to use all available levers and spheres available to influence change and she would continue to lobby government on this important issue.

Decision

To note the report.

ECCNSC/24/46 Adaptation and Resilience

The Committee considered the report of the Manchester Climate Change Agency & Manchester City Council Zero Carbon Team that considered the national and local context for climate adaptation and resilience, to explore the challenges that Manchester faced from a changing climate and to set out the work that was underway currently and planned for the future to support climate adaptation for the City.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background;
- Consideration of current policies, strategies and actions in Manchester;
- Understanding the climate projections for Manchester; and
- Information on the development of 2025-30 plans to address climate adaptation and resilience.

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

- Recognising and welcoming the breadth of work described throughout the report;
- More information was requested in relation to the approach to tree planting, noting the importance of these for providing shade;
- Had the Council considered adopting carbon offsetting as means of generating income to support tree planting activities; and
- Noting the recent tragic experience of flooding in Spain, appropriate consideration needed to be given to emergency planning, particularly in relation to food supplies, social cohesion, transport and communications.

The Strategic Director, Growth and Development stated that the Committee would be considering a report at their 16 January 2025 meeting that would provide a progress update of Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan for the period 2025-30 and this would contain further consideration of adaptation. The Committee noted that they would also be considering detailed reports on the Local Plan, Clean Air and the Green and Blue Infrastructure at future meetings that would consider a number of points raised by Members. She further commented that net zero and the delivery of quality public green space was a fundamental consideration to all decision-making, referring to the partner who had recently been appointed to deliver the Wythenshawe redevelopment as one example of many developments delivered across the city. She said that the ratio of 2:1 tree planting that was required in regard to the replacement of trees if a tree were to be removed during development, however they would always push for more.

The Planning Strategy Manager addressed the subject of trees and the approach to tree planting. He stated that appropriate consideration needed to be given as to the location of these as challenges could arise due to the existing infrastructure beneath the surface level. The Director of Highways said this could be prohibitive due to the cost of redirecting utilities and other existing infrastructure. He further commented that consideration also needed to be given to the cost of ongoing maintenance. The Planning Strategy Manager said that they did work with partners, such as City of Trees to explore all funding opportunities to deliver more trees. He commented that the emerging Local Plan would allow for a more nuanced approach to the issue of trees and development. He also referred to the CAVAT (Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees) methodology that was being considered within the draft Local Plan. (CAVAT provided a basis for managing trees in the UK as public assets rather than liabilities. It was designed not only to be a strategic tool and aid to decision-making in relation to the tree stock as a whole, but also to be applicable to individual cases, where the value of a single tree needs to be expressed in monetary terms).

The Planning Strategy Manager noted the comments made regarding biodiversity net gain and wildlife and commented that Local Nature Recovery Strategy consultation would run from 15 November to 31 January 2025 and information on this would be circulated following the meeting. He encouraged Members to circulate and promote this information through their networks.

The Executive Member for Clean Air, Environment and Transport stated that all opportunities to deliver trees through highways works and new developments were explored. She stated that she would undertake a specific piece of work with the Deputy Executive Member for Clean Air, Environment and Transport and officers on this activity.

The Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency addressed the issue of carbon offsetting and said that it had been agreed in Manchester that the city could not achieve its emissions target by this method. However, individuals could still consider this, noting the comments raised at previous meetings when this had been discussed. She said that the Local Net Zero Accelerator programme was also investigating novel ways to finance net zero activity.

The Strategic Lead, Resources & Programmes stated that Manchester, along with 31 other Local Authorities, had accepted an invitation to be part of a voluntary DEFRA Adaptation Reporting Power (ARP4 Strategy) pilot ahead of the inclusion of all Local Authorities in future rounds of ARP reporting.

The Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency noted the comments made regarding emergency planning and she advised the Committee that this was done at a local and national level.

Decision

To note the report.

ECCNSC/24/47 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.

Decision

The Committee notes the report and agrees the work programme.