

Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2020

Present:

Councillor Appleby – in the Chair
Councillors Azra Ali, Butt, Hassan, Hughes, Jeavons, Kilpatrick, Lynch, Lyons, Razaq, Sadler, Whiston, White and Wright

Apologies: Councillor Igbon

Also present:

Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods
Councillor Stogia, Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport
Councillor Richards, Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration
Councillor Sheikh, Assistant Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport
Councillor Grimshaw, Deputy Chair of the Licensing Committee
Councillor Midgley, Assistant Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration
Jonny Sadler, Programme Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency
Mike Simpson, Head of Growth, One Manchester
Judy Noah, Head of Development, One Manchester

NESC/20/17 Appointment of a Chair

In the absence of Councillor Igbon, a nomination was sought for the Chair of the meeting. Councillor Appleby was nominated and seconded.

Decision

To appoint Councillor Appleby as Chair of this meeting.

NESC/20/18 Minutes

Decisions

1. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2020 as a correct record.
2. To receive the minutes of the Climate Change Subgroup meeting of the 23 January 2020.

NESC/20/19 Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-25

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that described that in November 2018, the Council's Executive had agreed to establish a science-based carbon reduction target for Manchester, which required

the city as a whole to adopt a carbon budget of 15 million tonnes of CO₂ between 2018 and 2100. This would require a year-on-year reduction of at least 13%, emissions to be halved within five years, and lead to the city becoming zero carbon by 2038 at the latest.

In March 2019 the Council's Executive endorsed the Manchester Zero Carbon Framework 2020-38, as the city's outline approach to meeting its targets, as proposed by the Manchester Climate Change Partnership.

The Programme Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency referred to the main points and themes within the report which included: -

- Introducing the Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-25, Our strategy towards making Manchester a thriving, zero carbon, climate resilient city;
- Describing the key principles and approach to developing the framework;
- Noting that the Framework included ambitions regarding aviation CO₂ emissions and indirect emissions;
- Describing the four objectives that need to be met by 2025;
- Describing the Our Vision for 2025;
- Noting the consequence if the objectives were not met in 2020-25;
- Detailing the urgent actions to be taken to meet our commitments;
- An overview of the governance and partnership arrangements;
- Describing how progress was to be measured and reported;
- Information on how the framework would be reviewed to ensure it was current and up to date;
- Information on how Manchester would work with other cities; and
- A summary of the action plans to be taken by the Manchester Climate Change Partnership during 2020-25.

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

- Welcoming the Framework and noting that it was every citizens' responsibility, both locally, nationally and internationally to take actions to address climate change;
- Welcoming the inclusion of aviation CO₂ emissions and requesting an update on the Agency's discussions with Manchester Airport in due course;
- Welcoming recent announcements regarding the introduction of green buses in Manchester;
- Calling upon the Government to recognise the importance of the climate emergency and fund local authorities appropriately to respond to the issue;
- Noting that the Government had failed to respond to the Clean Air Plan submission;
- In regard to new builds, consideration needed to be given to sourcing local materials; and
- Welcoming the partnership approach and what was being done to engage with other sectors to build upon this model.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport stated that Manchester would continue to work with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to

deliver cleaner, carbon free public transport. She stated that the Clean Air Plan had been submitted to the Government over ten months ago, however no response had been received to date. She described that despite this, Manchester would continue to work with partners to understand and deliver this important work and reiterated the call for appropriate funding from Government to scale up this activity.

The Programme Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency addressed the comments regarding sourcing local materials by commenting that this needed to be considered in the context of understanding and mitigating indirect emissions. He described that developers were beginning to recognise and respond to the climate emergency, noting that Bruntwood who own, let and manage buildings, workspace and science facilities were members of the Manchester Climate Change Partnership. He further made reference to the UK Green Building Council that was established to radically improve the sustainability of the built environment, by transforming the way it was planned, designed, constructed, maintained and operated.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport commented that the Council would seek to influence building developments by using Planning Policy to raise the environmental standards of new builds and commented that a report was to be considered by the Executive at their meeting of 11 March 2020 that provided a context to how planning would support the Councils ambitions on climate change.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer informed the Members that climate change would be considered in all decisions taken by the Council and would be central to the Local Plan refresh.

The Programme Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency stated that the Partnership would continue to engage with the Airport regarding aviation CO₂ emissions and an update on this would be provided to the Committee at an appropriate time. He further stated that the Partnership would continue to engage with other sectors and key organisations across this city to promote and escalate this work.

Decisions

The Committee;

1. Note of the Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-25
2. Endorse the recommendations that Executive:
 1. Formally adopt the Manchester Climate Change Framework's aim, vision, objectives and targets as the definition of what Manchester needs to achieve in order to 'play its full part in limiting the impacts of climate change';
 2. On behalf of the city, endorse the Manchester Climate Change Framework as Manchester's high-level strategy for achieving the aim, vision, objectives and targets; and
 3. Deliver the Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan for the

period 2020-25 in order to contribute towards the successful implementation of the citywide Framework.

**NESC/20/20 Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan
2020-25**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that described the actions which would achieve a 50% reduction in the Council's direct CO₂ emissions between 2020 and 2025, as well as the enabling and influencing actions which will support the city's zero carbon ambitions.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport referred to the main points and themes within the report which included: -

- The Plan made a number of specific commitments;
- A summary of the estimated savings which would need to be achieved over the next 5 years;
- The different roles the Council had including enabling and influencing, reducing direct emissions and reducing indirect emissions;
- Noting that additional revenue and capital funding had been identified to respond to the 10 July 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration and to deliver the Plan;
- Presenting the table of actions;
- A summary of climate change research and insight;
- A summary of the second Youth Climate Action Summit that took place on the 17 January 2020; and
- A Summary of policy and funding asks of Greater Manchester and government.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport commented that following feedback from the Committee, the plan had been updated to include saving metrics in tonnes, a quarterly update against the actions would be produced and an annual carbon savings report would be produced. She further thanked Members and Officers for their work in bringing this plan together.

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

- Noting the risk to future European funding arrangements;
- Local events and meetings on the issue of climate change should be organised across all wards to engage with local residents;
- Welcoming the Plan as presented and noting the inclusion of metrics in tonnes;
- Further information was sought on the Phase 2 Carbon Reduction Plan for the Council's operational estate;
- What was being done to understand the condition of housing stock within the Private Rented Sector;
- The approach to planting new trees; and
- Had there been a skills audit undertaken to ensure the correct work force was available or trained to deliver this agenda.

In response to the comments expressed regarding future European funding arrangements the Strategic Lead Policy and Partnerships informed the Committee that confirmation was still required regarding future access to Horizon 2020 funding. He described that work continued with other Core Cities and Euro cities to understand the options for future funding streams to support this activity. In response to the other comments he stated that the Private Rented Sector was a diverse housing sector and the proposed stock condition survey was proposed to provide a better understanding of this sector. In response to the issue of trees, he stated that the challenge would be to accurately record the numbers of new trees planted, especially if they were planted on private land. He further commented that the Council had a Tree Action Plan and that a Tree Opportunity Mapping assessment would inform the planting to ensure that the appropriate species of trees were planted.

The Head of Corporate Estate and Facilities provided an overview of the anticipated activities relating to Phase 2 of the actions to reduce CO₂ emissions from the Council's operational estate by a further 50% reduction between 2025 and 2030. He informed Members that they would be kept informed of this work as this developed.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer described that there were many positive examples of resident engagement around the issue of climate change and ward plans would incorporate climate change actions.

In response to the question regarding a skills audit across the city to deliver the climate change agenda, the Chair informed the Committee that the Economy Scrutiny Committee had considered this item at a recent meeting and requested that the Scrutiny Support Officer circulate those reports to the Members for information. The Strategic Lead Policy and Partnerships stated that the Work and Skills Board oversaw this activity and that a 'Skills for a Zero Carbon Economy' subgroup had been established.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport reiterated the importance of delivering actions and reducing emissions in the next five years. She stated Manchester had developed an ambitious, informed and visionary plan for the next five years to respond to the climate emergency. She stated that the government had failed to respond adequately to the climate emergency and she called upon the government to establish a dedicated Climate Emergency Budget to support Manchester and other local authorities to respond to climate change.

The Chair advised that updates on the Action Plan would continue to be received by the Committee and the Climate Change Subgroup would continue to monitor specific aspects of the action plan in further detail.

Decisions

The Committee;

1. Note of the Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25.
2. Endorse the recommendations that Executive:

1. Adopt the Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25.
2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport, to update and amend the action plan as necessary. Future editions of the action plan to be reported to the Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee and published on the Council's website at: www.manchester.gov.uk/zerocarbon

NESC/20/21 Taxi Licensing and Work across Greater Manchester

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director (Growth and Development) that provided the Committee with information on the work undertaken in Manchester and across Greater Manchester (GM) to improve standards across Private Hire Taxis.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods referred to the main points and themes within the report which included: -

- Providing contextual and background information with key information regarding current issues affecting the regulation of Taxis and Private Hire Licences in the City;
- Manchester's processes and standards;
- Information on the GM Minimum Licensing Standards;
- The approach to improving Clean Air through vehicle emissions standards and the Clean Taxi Fund; and
- How Manchester was working with GM colleagues and the trades to meet the challenges and strive to improve standards.

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

- Supporting the intention for all GM standards to be raised to match that of Manchester;
- What was the anticipated timescale for introducing a standard policy across GM;
- Noting that the Manchester standards were designed to protect public safety;
- Supported the call for a reform of national legislation to improve standards nationally;
- What was the rationale for the different age limits for hackney vehicles compared to private hire vehicles and what funding was available for vehicle scrappage schemes;
- The compliance team needed to focus their attention on areas around the airport following complaints of antisocial behaviour by non-Manchester licensed private hire drivers;
- Were there delays in issuing licenses due to DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks;
- Had consideration been given to using accredited garages as test centres for vehicles;

- Could conditions be introduced to address vehicle idling.

The Licensing Unit Manager stated that she was aware of the issues regarding drivers' behaviour around the airport area articulated by the local ward Member. She advised that she would continue to liaise with the local Neighbourhood Teams to seek to address the issues described. She stated that she would encourage residents observing any anti social behaviour to report the details to the home licensing authority as Manchester could not enforce against drivers from out of the area. The Chair asked if consideration could be given to having enforcement officers visible to deter drivers as residents may not feel comfortable in tackling drivers.

The Deputy Chair of the Licensing Committee stated that he would speak with the Members outside of the meeting to discuss specific concerns.

The Licensing Unit Manager informed the Members that a consultation exercise on the proposals to standardise the conditions across GM would be undertaken in June 2020 and this would include proposals to address vehicle idling. She stated that Executive Members and lead officers across GM were in support of the proposals to raise standards, however a change in government policy was required to raise standards nationally. She further advised that DBS checks usually took between two and three weeks to be returned, but on occasion these could take longer and informed the Committee that this process was not in the control of the Council. In regard to vehicle testing centres and using alternative accredited garages she advised that the in-house facility was satisfactory and there were no delays in offering retests. She advised that the tests provided by the in-house offer was of a higher standard to the MOT test and enabled the monitoring of the quality and consistency of the testing to be undertaken. In response to a question regarding the decision taken in London to suspend UBER's licence, she advised that this situation was continuously reviewed in Manchester.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods stated the difference in the vehicle age criteria was in recognition that Private Hire Vehicles were on the road for longer periods and Hackney Carriage vehicles were approximately five times more expensive than a Private Hire vehicle. He further commented that Manchester was still awaiting a response from Government regarding the proposals to fund a clean taxi scheme.

Decision

To note the report.

NESC/20/22 Private Rented Sector Strategy 2020-2025

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director Growth and Development) that provided the committee with a progress update on the Market Rental Strategy and sets out the key themes for a draft Private Rented Sector (PRS) strategy for the city.

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration referred to the main points and themes within the report which included: -

- Providing a background and context of the private rented sector, both nationally and locally;
- An overview of the interventions delivered via the Market Rental Strategy 2015-20;
- Information on the approach to reviewing the strategy, including feedback from both renters and landlords;
- An overview of the Private Rented Sector Strategy 2020-2025, noting that the refreshed strategy would continue to focus on the areas that were most challenging, targeting resources to improve housing outcomes for some of our most vulnerable residents;
- The approach to short term lettings;
- Information on a range of Greater Manchester (GM) Initiatives;
- Strategic themes;
- The approach to delivering zero carbon and retrofitting properties;
- The approach to fire safety; and
- Next steps.

To supplement the report, the Committee received a presentation that further described the activities listed above. It further provided information on the place-based partnership work with Registered Providers and the One Manchester intervention rationale, that included using Affordable Housing Programme grant to acquire further homes from the private sector for refurbishment at an affordable rent (at Local Housing Allowance levels) and shared ownership options.

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

- Had there been any update following the Government's consultation on the use of Section 21 notices (Notice to Quit);
- Supporting the work to address empty properties;
- What work was being done to address short term lets;
- What was the approach to signposting tenants to obtain advice and information on their rights;
- How many improvement or compliance notices had been issued to private landlords outside of the designated Selective Licensing areas; and
- What training was offered to private landlords.

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration stated that despite reference being made to Section 21s in the Queen's speech, to date no further details had been made known and she was not confident that the Government had any intention to protect tenants in the PRS from unfair evictions. She further advised that work was ongoing with the Communications Team to promote sources of advice and information for tenants in the PRS.

The Interim Director for Housing and Residential Growth informed the Members that the Private Rented Sector Strategy 2020-2025 would seek to address the issue of empty properties and short term lets.

The Neighbourhood Manager, Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Housing stated that training had been delivered to landlords, that included information on property standards and the intention was to develop and deliver this training further. In response to the specific question regarding the number of notices issued outside of designated Selective Licensing areas, she stated this information would be circulated following the meeting.

Decision

To note the report.

NESC/20/23 Update on Selective Licensing Schemes

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) that provided a review of the four Selective Licensing schemes, commenting on their effectiveness to date and made a recommendation to consider further schemes.

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration referred to the main points and themes within the report which included: -

- Providing an overview of selective licensing, the legislative framework and the criteria used for introducing these in locations;
- Progress to date across all four Selective Licensing schemes in Manchester;
- Information on enforcement activity, including those issued to address poor property conditions;
- Analysis of the impact to date to address issues such as anti social behaviour and flytipping;
- Providing case studies and feedback from residents;
- Lessons learned; and
- Considerations for further Selective Licensing Schemes.

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

- Recognising the improvements that had been achieved in the designated selective licensing areas;
- Was there enough capacity with the teams to undertake inspections and engage with landlords;
- When would Selective Licensing be introduced in other areas of the city; and
- Was the register of licensed properties publicly available, similar to that of the Houses in Multiple Occupation register.

The Neighbourhood Manager, Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Housing informed the Committee that lessons learnt from current schemes would be used to inform any future schemes. She stated that she had no concerns regarding the delivery of enforcement work, adding that compliance inspections were a means to identify issues with properties and to then take positive action on behalf of tenants. She added that the team were always seeking opportunities to engage with private landlords to raise standards within the PRS. She further stated that the register of licensed properties was publicly available.

The Head of Community Safety, Compliance and Enforcement explained that currently legislation allowed for 20% of privately rented homes in the local authority to be subject to Selective Licensing. She said that consideration could be given to further schemes beyond the next phase as long as this was kept within the 20% limit and would welcome Members comments and local knowledge on future proposed schemes. Adding that as part of the formal process, any proposed new areas would be subject to public consultation.

Decisions

To note the report.

NESC/20/24 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 commented that Members would be holding a Work Programming session in May to inform the Committee's work programme for the new municipal year.

Decision

The Committee notes the report and approves the work programme, subject to the above comments.