

## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP

15 November 2023

Commenced: 4.35pm

Terminated: 6.25pm

**Present:** Councillors Jones (In the Chair), Affleck, Axford, Ferguson and Mills

**In Attendance:**

Ben Middleton	Assistant Director, Strategic Property
Jordanna Rawlinson	Head of Communications
Lynda Stefek	Transport for Greater Manchester
Anees Mank	Greater Manchester Combined Authority

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors S Homer, Naylor and Pearce

### 21. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

#### RESOLVED

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Naylor, that Councillor Jones be appointed as Chair for this meeting.

### 22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 23. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group held on 6 September 2023 were approved as a correct record.

### 24. GREATER MANCHESTER GREEN CITY REGION UPDATE

Due to the Chair's appointment to the Cabinet and subsequent absence from the meeting, an update could not be provided. It was advised that a new Chair would be appointed at the meeting of Full Council on 5 December 2023.

### 25. CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The group received an update from the Assistant Director, Strategic Property in relation to the Council's Climate and Environment Action Plan. The five priority areas of the Action Plan were greenspace & biodiversity; homes, workspace & council buildings; influencing others; reducing consumption & procuring sustainably; and travel & transport.

Members were informed that the Strategy and accompanying Action Plan was adopted in 2021 and took its lead from the Greater Manchester Five Year Environmental Plan.

An officer group met on a quarterly basis and was chaired by the Assistant Director, Strategic Property / Interim Head of Facilities Management to discuss progress towards actions within the action plan.

Each theme within the strategy has an accompanying action plan, with actions that were either achievable now or aspirational actions to be delivered in the longer term when opportunities presented themselves or when funding became available. The action plans were working documents that would see projects come onto and off the plan as progress was achieved.

A copy of the action plan had been circulated to all Members.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the content of the update be noted.**

### **26. GM FIVE YEAR ENVIRONMENT PLAN – TRANSPORT & TRAVEL**

The Panel received a presentation from Senior Manager for Environment and Air Quality, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM).

Members were informed that TfGM worked with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to deliver the city region's Environment Plan to ensure carbon neutrality by 2038. An overview of the Work Plan for 23-24 were provided to Group and areas of delivery were provided:

- The 'Bee Network' would deliver a fully integrated transport network for the people and businesses of Greater Manchester. This included bringing buses back under local authority control through franchising.
- A refreshed active travel mission focusing on accessibility, behaviour change and clear communications.
- Publically accessible vehicle charging points.
- Decarbonisation of the TfGM fleet.

Members welcomed the rollout of 720 ECVI devices across the city region, including the rollout of 60 rapid charging points for private hire vehicles. A business case was also being developed for a Greater Manchester wide car club to reduce car usage. In 2017, 60.7% of journeys were undertaken by car and the aim was to reduce this to 50.1% by 2040, to ensure that one million journeys were made by active or public transport.

Regarding the GM Bus Strategy, it was the ambition to ensure that bus travel became the first choice of travel in Greater Manchester. Bus franchising was currently taking place in phases and Tameside would be included from 5 January 2025. The ambition was to increase bus patronage by 30% by 2030 from 2022/23 levels. This would equate to 200 million passenger journeys per year. It was hoped that the introduction of a £2 flat single fare would encourage more people to use buses as alternative to the car.

Details of the City Region Sustainable Transport (CRST) Settlement were provided and it was explained that over one billion pounds of government funding had been provided. The funding was linked to carbon neutral transport and would help local authorities to initiate sustainable infrastructure to entice individuals out of their cars.

Information pertaining to the Bee Active Network Vision was highlighted to the group and it was explained that the aim was to connect all communities in Greater Manchester with high quality active travel infrastructure. The key features included protected infrastructure for those cycling on the roads, wider pavements and appropriate crossings for individuals. A £250 million programme of transformational active travel infrastructure was well underway. The Streets for All Programme would also help to ensure that streets were welcoming and safe for all people.

It was highlighted that there had been issues with vandalism involving the cycle hire scheme in those areas where it was being trialled across Greater Manchester. Due to the issues experienced, some cycle hire stations would be temporarily suspended so that more e-bikes could be focused in those areas where users had been most active. Members queried if the cycle hire scheme would be rolled out across Greater Manchester, including, Tameside and the Senior Manager for Environment and Air Quality would report back to Members in due course.

Members were keen that existing, as well as new infrastructure, was utilised to deliver the Plan and ensure a reduction in car journeys. This included improving the service on the railway line between Stalybridge and Stockport via Denton.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the content of the presentation be noted.**

## **27. GREATER MANCHESTER HOUSING RETROFIT**

The Panel received a presentation in relation to the Greater Manchester Housing Retrofit from the Programme and Policy Lead (Retrofit) at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

Details of the Domestic Local Energy Advice Demonstrator Project were provided to Members and it was explained that the £2.14 million programme, funded by Government, would be run via the North West Net Zero Hub and would operate from July 2023 to March 2025. The project would provide face-to-face energy efficiency advice on building fabric, focusing on particularly hard to reach residents and properties.

In Tameside, the project would work with Groundwork Greater Manchester to deliver and engage with communities across the borough. Groundwork would support the project with the following activities:

- Community engagement and support;
- Complete eligibility checks on households;
- Retrofit assessments;
- Undertake post install EPCs; and
- Post completion behaviour change and advice.

The eligibility criteria for the scheme was outlined and included those with a combined household income not exceeding £31,000 per annum; those in receipt of eligible benefits such as job seekers allowance or child tax credit, and those living in social housing with an EPC of D or below. It was hoped that 100,000 residents could be contacted in the remaining 18 months of the project.

An overview of the Your Better Home scheme was provided, which offered an independent service to guide able and willing-to-pay residents through the retrofit process of their home. The two main offerings at present were a Solar+ Survey (£120) and Whole House Plan (£450). Residents could also be taken through the full installation process, if required. Since the full launch in November 2022 numbers were low but positively were building thanks to direct letters to residents and a promotional campaign on the Metrolink network.

It was advised that the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) had closed on the 30 September 2023. The £20 million programme supported 963 homes across Greater Manchester to implement a number of Wave 1 measures that included air source heat pumps, Solar PV, cavity wall insulation, external wall insulation and improved windows and doors.

The Greater Manchester SHDF Wave 2.1 had commenced in April 2023 and would continue until 30 September 2025. This scheme would be larger than the first wave and represented a £97 million programme (£37 million grant and £60 million co-funding). The measures would move EPC Band D properties to EPC Band C and this would help to save the average household £276.78 and support 3,529 jobs and 63 apprenticeships.

Members were keen that hard to reach groups, such as the elderly, received relevant information in relation to the schemes as they were often less familiar with the internet and social media.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the content of the presentation be noted.**

## **28. CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMUNICATIONS QUARTERLY UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Head of Communications providing an update on the Council's Environment and Climate Emergency communication's strategy.

The Council's one-stop webpage called 'Think Green' brought together all elements of the Council's aim to tackle climate change, tips on being more environmentally friendly and access to information on public transport, walking & cycling and parks & countryside. Information on making homes more energy efficient was also available. The reporting officer highlighted that between 16 June and 5 October, the Think Green webpage had been visited 866 times, with recycling the most visited page. There had been web page spikes after media coverage and social media posts.

Details of the monthly focuses for the 'Think Green' campaign was highlighted. In the previous quarter, these had been:

- Get into the Garden – August
- Reduce Food Waste – September
- October – Be More Energy Efficient

Communications had been promoting a number of other events, including Ryecroft Conversation, which involved a day of conservation work and maintenance at Ryecroft Hall on 8 September; Recycling Week; and the GM Retrofit scheme that offered support for residents to improve their homes, reduce carbon emissions and costs.

Communications for staff and partner organisations continued to be an important part of the strategy. Information could be accessed through email signatures, the Chief Executive's Weekly Brief, LiveWire Magazine and staff portal. Partners could access information through Community Champions, the Leader's Weekly Brief and Communications Network.

The Council's 'Citizen' magazine had been delivered to homes across the borough and promoted home energy advice and support. Any household that had not received a copy was urged to contact the Communications team.

Upcoming monthly themed communications were outlined to Members. Themes to be promoted included 'Have a Green Christmas' in December, 'New Year, New Habits' in January and 'Greenspace Volunteer Appreciation' in February.

Members were urged to contact the Communication's Team with any items that would generate good publicity for the Think Green campaign. Members highlighted that Alder High School was working to become plastic free.

### **RESOLVED**

**That the content of the presentation be noted.**

## **29. URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

## **30. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group was scheduled to take place on 13 March 2024.

**CHAIR**