

## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP

16 June 2021

**Commenced:** 4.30 pm

**Terminated:** 6.25 pm

**Present:** Councillors L Boyle (Chair), Affleck, Cooper, B Holland, Jones, Martin, Mills, Patrick, Pearce and Taylor

**In Attendance:**

Emma Varnam	Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods
Paul Smith	Assistant Director, Strategic Property and Growth
Alison Lloyd-Walsh	Head of Environmental Development
Christina Morton	Environmental Development Officer
Garry Parker	Head of Waste Management
Graham Hall	Climate and Energy Manager
Mike Reed	Head of Major Programmes, Development and Investment
Nicola Kane	Head of Strategic Planning, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM)

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Carbon and Waste Reduction Panel held on 17 March 2021 were approved as a correct record.

### 3. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair had recently attended a meeting of the Greater Manchester Green City Region Board.

Members were informed that most Greater Manchester local authorities were still in the process of formulating their climate emergency plans.

### 4. LOW CARBON STRATEGY UPDATE

The Group received a presentation from the Head of Environmental Development providing an update on the Council's Low Carbon Strategy.

Members were informed that the Strategy was currently in draft form and was being updated in response to consultation feedback. The Head of Environmental Development advised that once the document had been updated it would be circulated to Members of the Group in the autumn for comment. Following input from Members, the Strategy would then proceed through the Council's governance process for formal adoption.

Regarding the Action Plan, it was explained that a sub-group of the Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group would be established to ensure more intensive work on the Plan. It was hoped that the working group would allow more information to be fed in from across the city region via external stakeholders. The officer group at the Council would also continue to meet regularly to

ensure the delivery of priorities detailed in the Low Carbon Strategy and Action Plan.

Members were keen that young people had input in relation to the Council's work tackling the climate emergency and thanked the Environmental Development Manager for allowing their inclusion in developing the Low Carbon Strategy. It was requested that members of the Tameside Youth Council be invited to the next meeting of the Group to present details of the work that they had been undertaking in relation to the environment and climate change.

The Environmental Development Team would continue to work across directorates, with stakeholders, partners and individuals to ensure the Council delivered on the priorities and targets it had formulated to address the climate emergency.

## **RESOLVED**

- i. That the content of the presentation be noted.**
- ii. That representatives of the Tameside Youth Council be invited to the next meeting of the Group.**

## **5. TRANSPORT STRATEGY UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a presentation of Head of Strategic Planning, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) outlining the transport strategy for the city region over the next two decades.

Members were informed that the ambition of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) was for 50 per cent of all journeys in the city region to be made by walking, cycling and public transport by 2040. At present, fewer than 40 per cent of journeys in Greater Manchester were made by sustainable transport. The ambition to increase sustainable journeys was part of a broader ambition for the city region to become carbon neutral by 2038. It was hoped that a more customer focused transport system would encourage residents and visitors to change their travel habits.

The Head of Strategic Planning highlighted that the GMCA had formulated a number of policies to reduce vehicle emissions, improve road safety and promote shared spaces for cyclists and pedestrians. The policies included:

- Working with partners to deliver transport interventions that improved the health of Greater Manchester residents, including reducing pollution from motor vehicles, increasing levels of physical activity, improving access to healthcare and reducing social isolation;
- Working with partners and key stakeholders to bring nitrogen dioxide levels on local roads within legal limits, and to reduce levels of particulate matter carbon dioxide, and noise emissions from vehicles;
- Working with partners to support a rapid transition towards low emission vehicles; and
- The Streets for All initiative to ensure that streets were welcoming and safe spaces for all people, enabling more travel on foot, bike and public transport.

To support the ambition to increase the number of sustainable journeys, a Five Year Transport Delivery Plan had been formulated as part of the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040. Details of the Tameside Local Implementation Plan were presented to the Group and included the development of the Bee Cycling and Walking Network, the proposed expansion of the Metrolink network to Stalybridge and the conversion of the Glossop rail line to tram/train operation. It was hoped that the Local Implementation Plan would encourage more people to make short journeys by modes of transport other than the private car.

Given that 30 per cent of Tameside's population did not have access to a car, it was considered vital that there were sustainable and affordable alternative transport methods for residents within the borough. It was highlighted that work was already being undertaken to improve sustainable transport, this included the introduction of the GM Clean Air Zone, the expansion of the electric car-charging network, and a £180 million invest in cycling and walking.

Members queried how elected councillors could have input into the 10 Local Plans for each GM local authority area. It was explained that the local implementation plans had been formulated in close partnership with each local authority. Members also enquired as to the support available to restore rail links within the area, in particular the restoration of a regular passenger service on the line from Stalybridge to Stockport via Denton. The Head of Strategic Planning advised that the 'Restoring Your Railway Fund' was a politically led process by MPs. Going forward, it was highlighted that carbon reduction was likely to be a key criteria for any proposed transport schemes

## **RESOLVED**

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

### **6. 10 POINT PLAN UPDATE**

The Panel received a presentation from the Climate and Energy Manager outlining the government's ten point plan for a green industrial revolution. The ten point plan, published in November 2020, set out the approach government would take to build back better from the pandemic, support green jobs, and accelerate the UK's path to net zero. To support the Plan, £12 billion of government investment would be mobilised, and potentially three times as much from the private sector, to create and support 250,000 green jobs.

Members were informed that a Tameside Council carbon reduction survey conducted between December 2020 and January 2021 indicated that 89.5 per cent of respondents were worried about climate change and 86.5 percent supported the Council taking action on climate change and wider environmental issues.

The Climate and Energy Manager outlined the ten points of the Plan:

- Advancing offshore wind;
- Driving the growth of low carbon hydrogen;
- Delivering new and advanced nuclear power;
- Accelerating the shift to zero emission vehicles;
- Green public transport, cycling and walking;
- Jet zero and green ships;
- Green buildings;
- Investing in carbon capture, usage and storage;
- Protecting the natural environment; and
- Green finance and innovation.

It was explained that the Council, the GMCA and Tameside businesses were at the forefront of the work in the city region to achieve the goals outlined in the ten point plan.

In relation to offshore wind and nuclear power, Members were advised that Tameside's Hyde Group were a key part of the offshore wind supply chain and had provided engineering and manufacturing solutions to the nuclear industry for over 30 years.

Details of zero emission vehicles were provided to the Group and it was explained that Tameside currently had the equal lowest number of electric vehicles registered in Greater Manchester. Following the government's announcement that diesel and petrol vehicles would be banned from sale by 2030, the Environmental Development Team was working closely with colleagues in Highways and with partners across the city region to increase the support infrastructure for electric vehicles.

The Climate and Energy Manager informed the Group that the greening of international shipping had the potential to significantly reduce carbon emissions in the Council's supply chain. It was explained that such efforts in conjunction with the decarbonisation of the public estate and the move towards renewable energy in Council buildings would support Greater Manchester's wider ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2038. It was also hoped that national investment in carbon capture and storage

could be scaled up over the coming years to benefit the borough's residents and businesses.

Members were advised that the Council was already mandated to deliver a greener, more biodiverse borough and this accorded with Point 9 of the ten point plan. The development of the Greater Manchester Five Year Environment Plan would assist the Council to deliver on its commitment to protect the natural environment. It was further explained that aspects of the Council's Planning remit now required enhancement of natural capital and this would form a crucial part of the proposed Godley Green development plan.

Point 10 of the government's 10 point plan concerned green finance and innovation and it was advised that the Council was working to develop a technology business innovation zone around St Peter's in Ashton-under-Lyne. The proposals would support local businesses to set up in a collaborative, supportive business incubator, working with the local supply chain in delivering decarbonisation technologies.

Members broadly welcomed the Plan and the potential benefits it could bring to the borough's residents, businesses and the wider environment. A discussion ensued regarding the possibility of the Council creating green apprenticeships for young people to support the objectives of the 10 point plan. The Head of Waste Management and Fleet Services explained that the Council had already created two apprenticeships that related to new technologies, including electric vehicles. It was the Council's ambition, working in partnership with Tameside College, to expand the number of new apprenticeships over the next three to five years as green transport and technology developed more widely.

## **RESOLVED**

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

## **7. WASTE UPDATE**

The Panel received an update on Waste and Recycling from the Head of Waste Management and Fleet Services.

Members were pleased to note that the borough's recycling rate had reached 59.73 per cent in April. This represented a 10 per cent increase when compared to the recycling rate of 49.21 per cent for 2020/21. The Council was also operating a fully unrestricted refuse service to residents and businesses.

The Head of Waste Management and Fleet Services advised the Group that there had been a significant reduction in cardboard and paper recycling contamination following a campaign during February 2021. The tonnage of cardboard and paper being rejected had decreased by 90.75 per cent and the number of rejected loads had dropped to three during February 2021. This was in comparison to an average of 37.60 rejected loads between April 2020 and January 2021. Rejected tonnages had also remained low in April and May with less than 40 tonnes per month being rejected.

The Council's Waste Management and Fleet Services had been working in partnership with other GMCA members to respond to the consultation on Extended Producer Responsibility and the Deposit Return Scheme. To ensure greater waste collection consistency, it was considered vital that businesses used more responsible packaging and looked to end wrapping products purely for cosmetic reasons. It was also hoped that an England-wide bottle deposit return scheme would help to significantly reduce the amount of plastic waste generated.

A discussion ensued in relation to household waste consistency and material quality, and the Head of Waste Management and Fleet Services explained that the Council was already achieving the aims set out in the England Waste Strategy Consultation through its four-bin system. The Council remained concerned that if the proposals for consistency outlined in the Strategy were mandated, they would prove costly to both Tameside and Greater Manchester without necessarily bringing any equivalent benefit.

Ambitions for 2021/22 were outlined to the Group and it was highlighted that Waste Services would be working to improve the carbon efficiency of its fleet. Currently, Waste Services had a partially electric fleet and it was hoped that a full electric fleet would be feasible in the short to medium term. However, the current cost of an electric refuse lorry was £385k, compared to £85k for a standard vehicle and this cost was currently prohibitive.

Members congratulated Waste Services on their nomination for 'Best Local Authority Recycling Initiative' at the Awards for Excellence in Recycling and Waste Management. The Chair and Members wished the team every success at the forthcoming award ceremony in July.

**RESOLVED**

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

**8. URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

**CHAIR**