

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP

15 September 2021

Commenced: 4.30 pm

Terminated: 5.35 pm

Present: Councillors Boyle (Chair), Cooper, Jones, Mills, Patel, Patrick and Taylor

In Attendance:

Ian Saxon	Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods
Andrew Wood	Senior Development Manager
Garry Parker	Head of Waste Management and Fleet Services
Graham Hall	Climate and Energy Manager
Christina Morton	Environmental Development Officer
Kate Gilmartin	Senior Project Officer, Local Energy North West Hub

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Affleck and Pearce

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

10. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group held on 16 June 2021 were approved as a correct record.

11. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair had recently attended a meeting of the Greater Manchester Green City Region Board. Members were informed that:

- The most recent meeting had reviewed the Board's appointments and terms of reference;
- The Board was on target to achieve most of its aims and plans were in place to address those that required additional input;
- A Green Summit would be held in October and a carbon neutral battle bus would be touring Greater Manchester to coincide with the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November; and
- A monthly newsletter continued to be distributed by the Board.

12. AMENDMENT TO ORDER OF BUSINESS

In accordance with the Council's constitution, the Chair advised Members of a change in the order of business to the published agenda.

13. COMMUNITY ENERGY

The Group received a presentation from the Senior Project Officer, Local Energy North West Hub informing Members of community level projects to achieve net zero carbon. At present, the planet was experiencing global warming of 1.2C and current estimates would take the rate to 2.9C, well above the 1.5C target that scientists agreed was the maximum to avoid uncharted climate tipping

points. It was highlighted that the next five years were the most important in the challenge of decarbonisation.

Members were advised that whilst top down policies went some way to delivering change, regional and local knowledge and networks helped to deliver place based solutions to achieve decarbonisation. Community energy was specifically defined as activity by a community of people, joining together to find and enable solutions for carbon reduction via energy efficiency or renewable energy installations.

Details of the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) were provided to the Group. The Senior Project Officer explained that the fund provided grants enabling communities to take on the challenge of decarbonisation, leveraging investment and delivering key projects. In total, £1 million of funding had been provided to the North West, with feasibility grants of up to £40k and development grants of up to £100k available. All projects that received funding were then put forward to the Energy Hub Management Board for consideration and possible implementation.

Community energy had a number of benefits that were supported by an ethos of collaboration and cooperation. It was highlighted that there was no big solution to decarbonisation and community energy had an important role to play in multiple smaller solutions that would significantly reduce carbon emissions. The community energy sector was also supported by Community Energy England, enabling a national network of people to find and deliver solutions, encouraging best practice and knowledge sharing.

The Senior Project Officer advised Members that the initiative had funded 13 projects across the North West to date. The projects included:

- Solar Meadow, Accrington – 2MW ground mounted solar panels selling 60 per cent of electricity generated to a local factory;
- Low carbon heat project, Chipping – feasibility grant to look at low carbon community heat in a village off the gas grid; and
- Bretton Hall Farm, Cheshire – development grant for a 49-hectare area of 30MW ground mounted solar panels.

A discussion ensued regarding the benefits that the Fund and community energy could bring to Tameside. Currently, the average household in the borough spent £2k a year on energy and this represented money leaving the area to multi-national energy companies. Members were advised that if communities within Tameside invested in local energy solutions, this would allow money to remain within the local area. Community based solutions also represented the best value money as they were cheaper than solutions for individual homes.

Members queried which organisations could apply for funding and it was explained that cooperatives, parish councils and community interest groups could submit a request for funding. The Group believed that the borough's network of Community Champions would be best placed to liaise with residents and businesses to establish their ideas for community energy projects. The Council's Communication's team would also be contacted to boost the scheme's profile through social media channels.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

14. DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Group received a presentation from the Climate and Energy Manager providing Members with proposed draft terms of reference for the five Action Plan sub-groups.

Members were informed that the proposed terms of reference for the sub-groups would be part of a toolkit for steering each action plan from paper to reality, to support the Council's wider Climate Change and Environment Strategy.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

15. UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

The Group received a presentation from the Climate and Energy Manager updating Members on the development of the Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy.

Members were informed that the Strategy was currently progressing through the Council's governance process. Following any comments at the Senior Leadership Team meeting in late September, and the adoption of any recommendations, the Strategy would proceed to the Executive Cabinet meeting on 27 October 2021 for formal approval and adoption by the Council. The Climate and Energy Manager thanked Members for their participation in the formulation of the Strategy to date.

The Action Plans, that would support the implementation of the Strategy, would see the formation of five working groups comprising Members of the Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group and a minimum of one officer with technical specialism. It was explained that each Action Plan, and associated working group, would relate to five areas; travel and transport; homes, buildings and workplaces; greenspace; reducing waste and procuring sustainably; and influencing people. Members were invited to join one or more the five groups to monitor the implementation of the Strategy and report back to the Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group on progress in each area.

Influencing people was considered particularly important because without the buy in from local communities, Tameside would be unable to reach its target of carbon neutrality by 2038.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

16. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Group received a presentation from the Climate and Energy Manager providing an update on electric vehicle charging infrastructure within the borough. Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) aspired to increase the number of charging points across the region tenfold by 2025.

The Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy comprised five key areas, including travel and transport. Members were informed that one of the actions identified within the Strategy was to support the transition away from vehicles with internal combustion engines. A key part of achieving this aim was supporting the adoption of electric vehicles.

Members were informed that the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) had drafted the Greater Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy. Tameside, as part of the city region, would reflect the overarching principles of the GMCA electric vehicle charging strategy within its own strategy, but would also include local detail. The Climate and Energy Manager advised Members that the intention was to get the Strategy into the governance process within the next three months and it was anticipated that the draft Tameside specific strategy would be available to view at the next meeting of the Group.

Whilst the GM-wide and Tameside strategies would outline the ambitions for electric vehicle charging over the medium to longer term, it was explained that the Council had already been undertaking work over the last three months to improve the infrastructure within Tameside. Virtual

and onsite meetings with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) had helped to determine favoured locations for charging points using GIS mapping and the local knowledge of Council officers.

The infrastructure offer for new charging points was divided into three distinct categories; registered vehicles (taxis), on-street residential charging and commercial charging hubs. It was explained that, subject to physical feasibility studies, a further six to twelve new charging locations would be delivered across the borough through two separate TfGM funded schemes. One would provide additional charging points for taxis and the other for residential areas with no off-street parking.

Members were advised that the new concept of dedicated, commercial charging hubs would be coordinated at a city region wide level by TfGM, with the opportunity for each individual borough to procure outside of the Greater Manchester wide framework if they desired. It was advised that the Council supported proposals for overarching branding and payment app technology for electric vehicle charging across Greater Manchester.

The Head of Waste Management and Fleet Services informed the Group that the Council had improved the electric vehicle charging infrastructure around its estate to support the Council's move towards an electric fleet.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

17. GMCA RETROFIT ACCELERATOR

RESOLVED

That the item be deferred to the next meeting of the Group due to be held on 17 November 2021.

18. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

CHAIR