

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP

17 November 2021

Commenced: 4.30 pm

Terminated: 6.25 pm

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

In Attendance:

Emma Varnam	Assistant Director, Place
Paul Smith	Assistant Director, Strategic Property
Garry Parker	Head of Waste Management and Fleet Services
Graham Hall	Climate and Energy Manager
Christina Morton	Environmental Development Officer
Mike Reed	Head of Major Programmes
Todd Holden	Energy Policy and Programme Lead, Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Matthew Ball	Managing Director, Greenredeem

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

20. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group held on 15 September 2021 were approved as a correct record.

21. GM RETROFIT ACCELERATOR

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Energy Policy and Programme Lead at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) detailing the work being undertaken to retrofit homes across the city region to improve their energy efficiency and increase the uptake of carbon neutral heating.

Members were informed that heating was the biggest source of carbon after transport and reducing the carbon footprint from heating would therefore be crucial in tackling climate change. The Energy Policy and Programme Lead highlighted some of the current barriers to retrofitting homes and achieving carbon neutrality:

- Lack of affordability of low carbon heating;
- Shortage of individuals to fit the necessary technology, including heat pumps;
- Energy companies are most familiar with installing gas boilers;
- Little legacy impact from government initiatives; and;
- Lack of interest from the majority of the public.

The Greater Manchester Retrofit Accelerator was designed to make it easier for householders to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. In order to achieve this, the Retrofit Accelerator would focus on those who were willing to pay for retrofitting. It was estimated that out of the 1.2 million properties across the city region, 300,000 householders were open to the idea of undertaking some form of retrofitting over the next five years.

It was explained that the retrofitting proposals of the Combined Authority were ambitious but not unrealistic and would seek to pursue fit for purpose intervention rather than perfection. The

Combined Authority would work with the local supply chain to shape the delivery vehicle and it was hoped the programme could attract individuals from the retail and hospitality sector to retrain, bringing their communication and hospitality skills with them.

The Group were advised that a market engagement process was conducted in July 2021 to scope the tender and scale and shape the value of the proposition. Following the tender process, a shortlist of providers would be unveiled in December 2021 and contracts would then be awarded on a two plus two year basis, with an interim review after the first two years.

Ultimately, the retrofit accelerator would not only help Greater Manchester achieve carbon neutrality by 2038, but would reduce fuel poverty and create a market of skills and jobs worth around £5 billion.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

22. BEHAVIOUR CHANGE TECHNOLOGIES

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Managing Director, Greendredeem, outlining the organisations role as behaviour change experts that moved strategy to action. Greenredeem worked with local authorities to create environmental campaigns, delivered to residents through targeted communications and reward and recognition techniques.

The Managing Director detailed the main ingredients to influence behaviour change, including:

- Highly accessible channels of communication;
- An understanding of the audience with the ability to develop and refine over time;
- Relevant messaging, taking local and personal circumstances into consideration;
- Clear and easy to understand communications;
- Rewarding and recognising positive action;
- An ability to adapt and keep content up-to-date; and
- Developing a one-to-one relationship with residents to become a trusted source of information.

Members were informed that Greenredeem could monitor all resident carbon activities through their digital behaviour change platform and dashboard. This would allow residents to track their progress and understand the difference their actions were making. It was further explained that engaging a community behind a common cause helped to motivate behaviour change.

Greenredeem had been successful in working with councils and residents over the long term, with some residents active with the organisation for more than 10 years. On average 24.1 million environmental actions had been achieved and 232 community projects and good causes were awarded more than £165,000 through their work with Greenredeem.

The Group were advised that Greenredeem had a team of content creators and copywriters who could formulate a 12 month content strategy for an authority such as Tameside. Such content was designed to go beyond 'the already committed' and connect with the traditionally recognised 'hard to reach'. Weekly, proactive and direct campaigns in relation to the Council's initiatives were designed to achieve lasting change that would reduce the impact of climate change.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

23. DECARBONISATION OF TAMESIDE'S CORPORATE ESTATE

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Environmental Development Officer updating Member's on the decarbonisation of Tameside Council's corporate estate. The project formed part

of the Greater Manchester Five Year Plan and wider initiative to decarbonise buildings across the city region.

Members were informed that as part of Phase 1 of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, Tameside Council had been awarded funding to improve the energy efficiency of 11 Council buildings. This included eight corporate buildings and three schools. In total, the Council had received £2.5 million in funding from the scheme to fit measures including insulation, draught proofing, improvements to Building Management Systems (BMS), solar PV, solar thermal and window replacements.

The Environmental Development Officer explained that the project was designed to reduce carbon emissions by an estimated 355.85 tonnes of CO₂e per annum. Work was now well underway on the 11 projects, including at Gorse Hall Primary School and Denton Festival Hall, and all projects would need to be completed by 22 March 2022.

Details of Phase 3 of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme were also outlined to Members. It was explained that applications for Phase 3 funding opened on 6 October 2021 and closed on 3 November 2021. The GMCA had submitted a joint bid, incorporating Tameside, and six buildings in the borough had been put forward for funding. In order to meet the funding requirements, a heating system had to be old and in need of replacement and local authorities had to match any funding provided through the government scheme. The outcome of the £3 million bid was due in early 2022.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

24. WASTE AND RECYCLING UPDATE

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Head of Waste Management and Fleet Services updating Members on the work being undertaken by the Council's Waste and Recycling Service.

Members were informed that total tonnage across the borough had increased by 10 percent since the start of the pandemic in March 2020. Despite the increase in online shopping over the past 18 months, there had been a decline in the amount paper and cardboard being recycled. However, there had been an increase in general waste as well as glass, cans and plastic bottles. It was explained that the increase was likely due to the number of individuals who were now working from home.

The Group were pleased to note that the Council was achieving a healthy recycling rate of 53 percent and no loads had been rejected since 30 July 2021. A campaign targeting the worst performing areas in the borough for bin contamination during February and March had proven to be extremely successful and had received the "Best Communications Campaign of the Year" award at the LARAC Conference Celebration Awards. Members congratulated the Head of Waste Management and the team for their success at the award ceremony and in significantly reducing bin contamination.

Despite some disruption to waste collections due to the nationwide HGV driver shortage, it was advised that all rounds were now being completed and there had been a significant reduction in complaints.

A 12-week trial of three weekly collections of blue and black bins in central Hyde, Haughton Green and Ridge Hill had recently concluded. It was explained that residents had been consulted on the refreshed Waste Strategy and Enforcement Policy and 1,500 individuals provided their feedback. The Service hoped to present the information relating to the trial at a meeting of the Executive Cabinet on 15 December 2021.

In anticipation of the implementation of the Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone (CAZ) on 30 May 2022, the Head of Waste Management and Fleet Services advised Members that the Council's current fleet of vehicles was being reviewed to ensure its compliance with the requirements of the CAZ. The Council was reviewing its reliance on fossil fuels and considering alternative options, including electric and nitrogen. Of the Council's fleet of 167 vehicles, 11 vehicles had been identified as non-compliant and those that could not be retrofitted to meet the necessary standards would be withdrawn as the costs for the authority would be prohibitive.

The potential challenges facing the Waste and Recycling Service during 2022/23 were outlined to the Group. It was explained that the Resources and Waste Strategy (RAWS) for England and Wales, that sought to standardise waste collections, had proposed the separate collection of food waste on a weekly basis. There was concern that this would increase the number of vehicles that Tameside would have to use in order to comply with this requirement. Currently, the Council was compliant with some elements of the RAWS but it was not clear at the present time if the proposals would be mandated. Members were advised that a Technical, Economic and Environmental Practicability Assessment to justify a system that deviated from the Strategy had been developed.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

25. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY PROGRESS UPDATE

Members received a verbal update from the Assistant Director, Strategic Property advising that the Climate Change and Environment Strategy, and associated Action Plan, would be presented to Executive Cabinet for approval on 15 December 2021.

RESOLVED

That the content of the update be noted.

26. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT TEAM UPDATE

Consideration was to a presentation of the Climate and Energy Manager updating Members on the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Strategy, the Greater Manchester 'Go Neutral' scheme, the COP26 climate change summit and carbon emissions in Greater Manchester.

Members were informed that the Combined Authority's EVCI Strategy had been published in August 2021 but due to issues had not yet been ratified. It was proposed that Tameside's own strategy mirrored the wider Greater Manchester document with local adjustments. The Council was keen to mirror the wider GM-strategy to ensure continuity of branding, systems and technologies enabling a seamless user experience across the city region.

The strategy was considered vital because it set out official guidance to stakeholders on issues relating to car parks and highways. It would also assist the Council in making decisions when determining if and how any supplier owned infrastructure would be introduced into the public domain.

Regarding funding for charging infrastructure, the Climate and Energy Manager explained that early feedback from the Department for Transport on the GMCA bid was that limited funds had the potential to be diverted elsewhere. Consequently, four additional charging points in the borough would not transpire unless otherwise funded. These proposed additional points were specifically to deal with issues of on-street residential parking, which presented a major barrier to electric vehicle ownership.

Currently there were 30 chargers across Tameside and it was hoped that through the GM-wide strategy the number would increase tenfold, to 300, over the next two years. It was anticipated

that to increase the number of charging points tenfold in the borough over the next two years would cost between £2million and £3 million. Given the challenges related to funding from central government, the Council would need to explore the possibility of supplier owned infrastructure if it was to support residents and businesses in making the move to more sustainable private cars.

Details of the Greater Manchester 'Go Neutral' scheme were outlined to the Group. Go Neutral was intended to consolidate parcels of land that could be used for renewables, battery storage and nature enhancement (carbon sinks). Members were informed that there were parcels of land across Tameside that until now had been of no developmental value, but could be suitable under the Go Neutral proposals for locating renewable power solutions, including solar PV and battery storage. Also included in the proposals were some operational sites where the land or roof area made them candidates for investment in renewable.

The Council had shared a list of likely sites but was awaiting confirmation from the Go Neutral scheme before selecting officers take to take the proposals through the legal and planning process. It was hoped that the currently unused land would generate low carbon power that could contribute to Manchester's Smart Grid and generate income from assets that currently lay dormant.

A summary of the key announcements from the COP26 climate change summit were presented to the Group:

- Financial pledges to support developing, climate vulnerable nations;
- Leaders from 120 countries, representing 90 percent of the world's forests, pledged to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030;
- Over 100 countries pledged to cut greenhouse emissions by one third by 2030; and
- The US and China pledged to boost cooperation in order to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

To coincide with the COP26 summit, it was reported that the Mayor of Greater Manchester had hosted a COP26NW event where leaders from across the region came together to breakdown challenges and propose solutions to tackle climate change. Members were pleased that Tameside was doing its part through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and its engagement with the Go Neutral scheme.

It was highlighted that as part of accelerated plans to reduce climate change, Greater Manchester had committed to carbon neutrality by 2038. Members were informed that the Tyndall curve was way in which the GMCA and its constituent authorities were setting science based targets for an emissions pathway. The Climate and Energy Manager explained that despite there being a marginal reduction in emissions, if the city region continued on its current trajectory then it was possible that it could have accounted for all of the future allocated emissions by the curve within six years.

The GMCA continued to chart progress in meeting its environmental targets across the city region. Currently, only nature recovery and renewable energy regeneration were on target and this meant that significant work would need to continue with communities across Greater Manchester to facilitate the necessary behaviour change. The Climate and Energy Manager highlighted that Tameside could be proud of the work it had done so far in helping Greater Manchester achieve its targets, particularly in relation to reducing energy consumption.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

27. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY TASK GROUPS

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Climate and Energy Manger updating Members on the progress of the Climate Change and Environment Strategy task groups. The five task groups; Influencing Others; Travel & Transport; Greenspace & Biodiversity; Reducing Waste &

Procuring Sustainability and Homes, Workplaces & Buildings, would monitor progress in achieving the targets contained within the Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy.

The Group were informed that Members and officers had now been nominated for each of the five groups and would work closely together to scrutinise the progress of the Strategy and Action Plan. Each group would assess the deliverables featured in the Strategy, log any progress, barriers and alternatives and a feedback template would be provided for each group to report back to the Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group. It was proposed that meetings of each task group took place on a monthly basis with the first meetings to take place before the Christmas break.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

28. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

CHAIR