

## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP

15 June 2022

Commenced: 4.35 pm

Terminated: 6.10 pm

**Present:** Councillors Boyle (Chair), Affleck, B Holland, and Turner

**In Attendance:**

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Emma Varnam     | Assistant Director, Operations & Neighbourhoods |
| Lindsay Johnson | Head of Asset Strategy                          |
| Graham Hall     | Climate and Energy Manager                      |
| Lorraine Cox    | Director, STAR Procurement                      |
| Michael Crook   | Head of Strategic Procurement, STAR Procurement |

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors Mills and Roderick

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group held on 16 March 2022 were approved as a correct record.

### 3. STAR PROCUREMENT - SUSTAINABILITY

The Group received a presentation from the Director of STAR Procurement concerning sustainable procurement. Reducing waste and procuring sustainably formed a key part of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Members were informed that STAR procurement was a public sector, shared service operating across Rochdale, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford councils. The organisation had been operating since 2014 with the aim of improving economies of scale for local authorities when procuring services. STAR's five objectives were supporting communities, delivering commercially, building collaboration, providing confidence and being courageous.

A crucial part of STAR's procurement process was ensuring social value, including economic, environmental and social gain. It was explained this included employing local people, ensuring those delivering the contract were spending money in the four STAR boroughs or Greater Manchester and guaranteeing those who had been offered the contract, delivered on the contract. Details of STAR's performance in this area were shared with the Group and it was highlighted that 50.9 per cent of local spend was retained across the four STAR boroughs and 78.1 per cent was spent across Greater Manchester as a whole. This figure was among the highest nationally. In relation to Tameside, for every one pound the Council put into STAR, they received a £4 return on their investment.

The Director outlined to Members how the organisation ensured that social value was included in the tender for contracts. STAR used National Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs), a list of around 50 areas that bidders could select to ensure their contracts had added social value. Social value was required on all procurement over £25k and all contracts above £50k. In relation to environmental measures, this included:

- Carbon emission reductions through reduced energy use and energy efficiency measures – on

site;

- Car miles saved on a project as a result of a green transport programme or equivalent (e.g. cycle to work programmes, public transport or carpooling programmes);
- Volunteering time for environmental conservation and sustainable ecosystem management initiatives; and
- Reducing waste through reuse of products and materials.

It was explained that bidders were then allocated a score based on the level of social value that they could deliver. When deciding on a successful bidder, social value consisted of 20 per cent of the decision making process.

The Director highlighted that bidders were often reluctant to select environmental measures as these were often seen as the hardest to deliver and many preferred to deliver on other TOMs such as apprenticeships. To ensure greater environmental sustainability, it was explained that STAR and its partner councils were working with environmentally responsible contractors. This included contractors committed to carbon literacy, those with evidence of a carbon reduction plan and a statement related to Greater Manchester's goal of carbon neutrality by 2038.

It was explained that STAR could work to build in the Council's specific ambitions related to its Carbon Reduction and Environment Strategy when awarding contracts and procuring services. A bespoke set of TOMs had been created for Stockport Council and STAR hoped to be able align its TOMs with Tameside's specific corporate priorities.

Members queried how many TOMs a particular bidder was required to select as part of the procurement process. It was explained that this depended on the type of contract and its priorities. In relation, to compliance with particular TOMs, Members questioned how this could be achieved. The Director advised the Group that in relation to environmental measures, these were not currently mandated but the aim was to mandate compliance and it was hoped this would be agreed at the meeting of STAR's joint committee in September.

The group discussed how smaller businesses could be assisted to implement environmental measures given the cost implications that were often involved. It was explained that it was always STAR's ambition to work with small businesses and where it wasn't possible for them to deliver a contract individually, larger businesses could be required to work with them in the supply chain. However, it was highlighted that it was important that a business, regardless of its size, be committed to certain environmental standards.

## **RESOLVED**

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

## **4. UPDATE AND RECAP FOR NEW MEMBERS**

The Climate and Energy Manager provided a summary of the aims and objectives of the Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group for the benefit of newly appointed Members.

The terms of reference of the Group were outlined to Members:

1. Delivering and then executing the Climate Change and Environment Strategy;
2. Monitoring the development, resourcing and execution of items contained within the associated plans;
3. Acting as an interface between officers, elected Members, interested parties and others to drive net-zero and environmental protection and enhancement initiatives;
4. Actively analysing where intervention was necessary to guide the borough towards its net zero ambitions; and
5. Being prepared to adapt the approach to management and mitigation of climate change issues as circumstances and science developed.

Members were informed that the Council had declared a climate emergency in February 2020 in response to public sentiment. Following the declaration of the climate emergency, the Council had adopted a Climate Change and Environment Strategy in November 2021. The Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group, and its task groups, monitored progress against the five live action plans; Greenspace; Travel & Transport; Homes, Buildings & Workplaces; Waste Reduction & Sustainable Procurement; and Influencing Others.

Tameside, in line with other Greater Manchester boroughs, was committed to ensuring carbon neutrality by 2038. Currently, the Council emitted 10,000 of CO2 per year and in order to comply with the 2038 target, would need to reduce corporate emissions by 14% each year. In order to achieve this target, the Council was primarily focused on energy use and waste management. The strategy also defined a mix of objectives that included carbon reduction across the wider borough for which the Council was not directly responsible.

In order to get the message out to residents and businesses, the Council had developed the Cut the Carbon campaign and further details in relation to this were available at [tameside.gov.uk/cutthecarbon](https://tameside.gov.uk/cutthecarbon).

#### **RESOLVED**

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

### **5. UNITED UTILITIES UPDATE**

The Climate and Energy Manager provided an update on a proposed visit to the Group from United Utilities relating to Member's concern about river water quality in Tameside.

Members were informed that a representative from United Utilities had been invited to the meeting of the Group on 15 June 2022 but had instead offered to attend the following meeting scheduled for 7 September 2022.

A discussion ensued regarding the proposed visit and Members were keen that any presentation from United Utilities addressed specific concerns about the company's discharge policy and pollution in the borough's rivers rather than a general presentation related to environmental issues. It was also suggested that representatives from the Environment Agency and the Canal and River's Trust also be invited to a future meeting of the Group.

#### **RESOLVED**

- i. That the content of the update be noted.**
- ii. That the Assistant Director, Operations & Neighbourhoods and the Climate and Energy produce a letter inviting a senior officer from United Utilities to the next meeting of the Group on 7 September 2022 to explain the company's discharge policy and levels of pollution in the local river system.**

### **6. ENERGY COSTS**

The Climate and Energy Manager delivered a presentation on increasing energy costs and explained that the Council had seen a 100% increase in the cost of energy in recent months. It was anticipated that costs would rise by a further third in 2023 before reducing over time.

Members were informed that the Council was working with STAR procurement and regional partners in a consortium to leverage bulk procurement advantage with a view to reducing costs. The Council was also working on invest to save proposals with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA) 'Go Neutral' scheme. Go Neutral was working to build a de-risked portfolio of land, building and car park assets for smart energy infrastructure opportunities that would be delivered through a range of investment and delivery models.

It was explained that the tender for Go Neutral had been awarded in January 2022 and a number of organisations were ready to help the Council deliver on sustainable energy production projects. The Climate and Energy Manager hoped to bring a confirmed list of buildings and proposed schemes to the next meeting of the Group in September.

A discussion ensued regarding infrastructure for charging electric vehicles within the borough and Members were advised that a draft vehicle charging infrastructure strategy would be taken through the Council's governance process shortly. The strategy would include details of how residents who did not have access to off-street parking could charge their vehicles.

## **RESOLVED**

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

## **7. ACTION PLAN TASK GROUP UPDATES**

The Group received a presentation from the Climate and Energy Manager updating Members on the work being undertaken by the Action Plan task groups. The task groups comprised both elected Members and officers and were currently meeting on a monthly basis. The five task groups related to greenspace; travel & transport; homes, buildings & workplaces; waste reduction & sustainable procurement; and influencing others.

Following Annual Council and the appointment of new Members to the Group, the membership of the task groups would be reviewed and Members were encouraged to contact the Chair and Climate and Energy Manager to express their interest on sitting on one of the five groups.

Members were provided with a summary of the plan for each task group and the progress that had been achieved to date.

### Greenspace

#### Plan:

- Building natural capital into new and existing developments to maximise the value that the environment brought across the borough.
- Planning for and building green and natural areas, including Council owned and managed land, influencing new private developments and looking for opportunities in existing areas.
- Increasing tree cover across the borough.
- Ensuring that the Council maintained the greenspaces around Tameside in a way that maximised opportunities for increasing and enhancing biodiversity.
- Encouraging sustainable allotment sites and increasing the growth of produce within the community.

#### Progress:

- Colleagues in Greenspace and Estates had begun the analysis of plots using Go Neutral as a starting point for biodiversity net gain and other planting opportunities.
- Looking to City of Trees – further planting opportunity with volunteer support possibly on scrubland.
- Working with the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) to determine the approach to quantify biodiversity net gain of any rewilding/renaturing projects.
- Working with Cheshire Wildlife Trust (CWT) to develop links and secured use of CWT resources for Tameside – online interactive tool to enhance, and track, biodiversity.
- Local Plan driving opportunities to secure biodiversity net gain.

### Travel & Transport

#### Plan:

- Delivering a rapid transition of the Council's own vehicle fleet to electric.
- Enabling the rapid shift to electric vehicles by facilitating the installation of electric vehicle (EV)

charging points across the borough.

- Reducing the need to own and use a car through managing developments in the Local Plan, including housing developments with quality walking and cycling provision, restricting car parking provision, providing transport and delivery hubs and supporting climate adaptation measures such as greenspace and low carbon architecture.

Progress:

- Fleet Replacement Strategy.
- Collaborating with TfGM to secure a number of EV charging points for Tameside in car parks, specifically for taxis (installation late summer – four sites in total).
- Supporting the transition to EV ownership – investing in on-street EV charging pilot project (Estates, Highways & Climate Change teams working in partnership).
- Local Plan embedding a number of measures to promote hyper-locality, modal shift, supporting active travel and enabling EV ownership.

Homes, Buildings & Workplaces

Plan:

- Working to understand and map opportunities across the borough for low carbon opportunities.
- When replacing heating systems or other technologies such as lighting in Council owned buildings, installing low carbon alternatives where viable, seeking to avoid fossil fuels.
- Completing a full assessment of Council owned land and buildings for viability for development of renewable energy by the end of 2021 and developing, where viable, solar thermal, heat pumps and photovoltaic. Investing in the development of renewable energy and energy storage where appropriate.
- Obtaining an average energy rating of D or better by 2024 and C by 2030 for Council buildings where economically viable.

Progress:

- Building Heat Decarbonisation Plan delivered 2021.
- Local Area Energy Plan delivered 2022.
- Go Neutral: ongoing deliberation on prime opportunities, involving colleagues in planning, climate change and estates.
- Low Carbon Skills Programme: building bid to produce detailed, costed appraisals of potential future building decarbonisation schemes in progress.
- Public Sector Decarbonisation phase 1: 14 Council buildings. Ninety-five per cent complete with deadline of 30 June (c500tonnes CO2 per annum saved). £2.3m programme.
- Public Sector Decarbonisation phase 3: grant successfully applied for and match funding secured – projects in detailed design phase for a further six Council buildings. £2.9m programme.
- Ashton District Heating Network: Feasibility complete, next phase would be generating a funding bid for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) money. Town Centre Redevelopment Team involved.

Waste Reduction & Sustainable Procurement

Plan:

- Embedding environmental sustainability criteria in social value procurement mechanisms and ensuring the Council's supply chain was minimising carbon emissions.
- Developing a healthy and sustainable food strategy for delivery by the end of 2021/22.
- Reducing consumption, minimising waste and recycling as much as possible.

Progress:

- Early-stage discussions regarding procurement channels and how the Council drove sustainability with partners.
- Reduction of water use across the Tameside estate – new water service provider assisting with this through better monitoring and leak detection.
- Continued monitoring and management of waste services.

- Public Health team (Food Partnership Steering Group) working towards a Strategy that incorporated sustainable food and healthy choices.

#### Influencing Others

##### Plan:

- Embedding sustainability across the workforce and wider borough.
- Communicating the Council's activities to residents and businesses.
- Creating momentum in communities through information.

##### Progress:

- Drafted and published the Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-25.
- Created a webpage that acted as a hub for Climate Change and Energy.
- Disseminated information on initiatives such as the publication of the Strategy.
- Facilitated canvassing of opinion and fostering of debate through social media channels (most recently regarding EV charging infrastructure).

Members welcomed the progress that had been made to date but were keen that further steps were taken to ensure that the Council reached its target of reducing carbon emission by 14 per cent each year to achieve the Greater Manchester goal of carbon neutrality by 2038.

#### **RESOLVED**

- That the content of the presentation be noted.**
- That an update on walking and cycling be brought to the next meeting of the Group.**
- That the Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods bring an update on transport, air quality and waste to the next meeting of the Group.**
- That new Members be invited to join one of the five Action Plan task groups.**

#### **8. URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

**CHAIR**