

CARBON AND WASTE REDUCTION PANEL

18 November 2020

Commenced: 4.35 pm

Terminated: 6.10 pm

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

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| In Attendance: | Emma Varnam | Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods |
| | Paul Smith | Assistant Director, Strategic Property and Growth |
| | Alison Lloyd-Walsh | Head of Environmental Development |
| | Garry Parker | Head of Waste Management |
| | Gary Mongan | Regulatory Services Manager |
| | Danielle Bamford | Project Support Officer |

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Patrick and Taylor.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Carbon and Waste Reduction Panel held on 9 September 2020 were approved as a correct record.

17. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair and the Head of Environmental Development had attended the Greater Manchester Green City Region Board meeting in October.

The Chair advised Members that the Board included representatives from across the ten boroughs and was an opportunity to outline the structures and governance processes. The main aim of the Board was to assist in the delivery of the Greater Manchester Five Year Environment Plan and participate in monitoring progress.

Activity for each Borough to undertake had been identified and the Chair explained that each local authority would provide feedback at future meetings of the Board on progress.

18. CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Panel received a presentation from the Head of Environmental Development updating Members on the progress of production of the Council's Low Carbon and Environment Strategy and associated Action Plan. The Executive Leader had declared a climate emergency on behalf of the Council in February and one of the aims of the strategy and action plan was to strive to put climate change at the heart of everything the Council did. The production of a strategy was a recommended action once a climate emergency had been declared.

Members were informed that the proposed strategy would be brought to the Group before being taken through the Council's formal governance procedure. The Strategy would encompass the five themes taken from the Greater Manchester Plan. Officers were keen that Members of the Group were able to give their input before adoption. It was considered essential that the document was

focused, easy to understand and impactful in explaining how the Council proposed to address the environmental crisis and how the strategy would link to other activities across the Council. The Strategy would not be limited to climate change but would also outline how wider environmental problems could be tackled, such as plastic waste in the River Tame.

The Head of Environment Development explained that the Strategy would outline what the Council intended to do but it was highlighted that the Council was already working to ensure that it improved its environmental credentials and sustainability. The Council was undertaking tree planting across its estate and was working with landowners across the Borough to identify additional sights where trees could be planted. In addition, a carbon literacy training squad had been established and was working towards establishing the Council as an accredited carbon literate organisation.

Whilst the Strategy was considered the mission statement, the Action Plan was the collection of actions that would contribute to the Council achieving its aims. The formation of a Climate Emergency Officer's Group would assist with the formation of a coherent Action Plan but it was considered important that there was input from businesses and the local community, particularly young people. It was anticipated that the Strategy and Action Plan would be finalised during the early summer of 2021. Ultimately, the Action Plan would continue to grow and change to ensure that it maintained its relevance.

Following the Government's announcement of a 10-point green plan, Members were keen to discuss the content of the plan and its potential implications for the Council at the next meeting of the Panel.

RESOLVED

That Members of the Panel contribute to the development of the Strategy and Action Plan and the subsequent monitoring of actions.

19. UPDATE ON GOVERNMENT GRANTS

The Panel received a presentation from the Head of Environmental Development providing Members with an update on the £3 billion worth of grants recently announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to improve the energy efficiency of homes, businesses and public buildings.

Members were informed that the Government would invest £1 billion over the next year in a Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme that would offer grants to public sector bodies, including schools and hospitals, to fund both energy efficiency and low carbon heat upgrades. The Council was submitting a joint bid through the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) for funding for the installation of measures including double/triple glazing, ground source heat pumps and LED lighting. The outcome of the bid was likely on 11 December 2020 and all capital projects would need to be completed by September 2021.

A joint bid had also been submitted through the GMCA to the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Scheme. The funding in Phase 1a would be used to support low income families to upgrade their homes through measures such as loft and underfloor insulation, low carbon technologies and solar photovoltaic. The Project Officer advised that Phase 1b of the LAD Scheme would expand the scheme to include properties with an energy efficiency rating of D. Phase 1a was only open to those individuals whose property had an energy efficiency rating of E, F or G. In addition, Phase 1b would be expanded to cover whole areas, such as a row of houses, rather than just individual properties. The £2 billion Green Homes Grant Scheme was open to all homeowners and residential landlords in England. The grant provided up to £10,000 towards the cost of making an individual's home more energy efficient. Vouchers needed to be redeemed within three months from the date they were issued, or by 31 March 2022, whichever came earliest.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

20. CLEAN AIR ZONES AND MINIMUM LICENSING STANDARDS

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbours and the Regulatory Services Manager concerning the proposed Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone and Minimum Licensing Standards for taxis. Air pollution was linked to a range of serious health conditions and contributed to around 1,200 early deaths in Greater Manchester each year.

Members were informed that the consultations on the Clean Air Zone and the Minimum Licensing Standards had been launched on 8 October and would run concurrently until 3 December. It was explained that the consultation on the Clean Air Zone was seeking views on key elements of the scheme including its proposed boundary; daily charges; discounts and exemptions; and funding packages available to support local businesses to upgrade to cleaner vehicles. The Government had already awarded Greater Manchester £41 million in initial funding and local leaders were seeking more than £100 million further funding, alongside a £10 million 'hardship fund', to support those considered most vulnerable to the financial impact of the Clean Air Zone.

The Clean Air Zone, which would apply only to the most polluting vehicles, was likely to be introduced during Spring 2022 and it was anticipated that it would remain in full operation until at least the second half of 2026.

Members raised concerns that vehicles using certain sections of the A57 and the A628 through the Borough that were managed by Highway's England would not be included within the Clean Air Zone. It was highlighted that these roads were amongst the most polluted in Tameside given the high volume of lorries and other commercial vehicles that used these roads. The Regulatory Services Manager advised Members that negotiations were taking place with Highway's England to have these roads incorporated but they were concerned that motorists would attempt to use other routes if these roads were included.

A discussion ensued regarding the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had upon air quality across Greater Manchester. It was explained that analysis was currently underway to assess the effect of COVID-19 on the Clean Air Plan over both the short and long term but it was considered too early to draw any conclusions. One of the major challenges following the pandemic would be to build public confidence to encourage people back onto buses and trains.

Proposals to introduce Minimum Licensing Standards for taxi and private hire vehicles formed part of an agreement to raise standards across all authorities within Greater Manchester. The foundation that underpinned the proposals was a desire to:

- Promote public safety and visibility of the fleet;
- Ensure a high standard of drivers;
- Support a move to a cleaner environment; and
- Improve accessibility.

Addressing concerns that the proposed measures outlined had the potential to be overly prescriptive, Members were informed that a range of exemptions would be implemented. Permanent exemptions set by the Government included historic vehicles; military vehicles, disabled passenger vehicles and specialist emergency service vehicles. Greater Manchester had also proposed temporary local exemptions until 31 December 2022 including:

- Coaches and buses registered to a business address within Greater Manchester and not used on a registered bus service in the area;
- Greater Manchester licensed wheelchair accessible hackney carriage and private hire vehicles;
- Outstanding finance and lease on non-compliance vehicles until the agreement ended or until 31 December 2022 (whichever was sooner);
- LGVs and minibuses (which were not licensed taxis or PHVs);
- Driving into the zone because of a road closure and subsequent diversion; and
- Limited supply (awaiting the delivery of a compliant vehicle).

It was also recognised that some taxi drivers used their vehicle for private as well as business use and it was therefore agreed that such individuals could apply for a discounted charge of 5/7 of the

weekly total from 2022. The Assistant Director urged Members to respond to the consultation and also requested that they encouraged residents within their wards to respond so that the views of as many people as possible within Tameside were reflected in the final decision.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

21. WASTE UPDATE

The Panel received an update on Waste and Recycling from the Head of Operations and Neighbourhoods. The Panel were informed of the work being undertaken by the Service to maintain normal operations during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent Government-enacted lockdowns.

Members were informed that since the pandemic began in March, the Council had been able to maintain 100 per cent of its scheduled bin collections. The amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) available to staff had been increased and fortnightly health and safety as well as monthly trade union meetings were taking place to ensure those delivering these key services had a voice and felt comfortable undertaking their role.

The lockdown measures enacted on 23 March 2020, along with localised restrictions in place since July, had brought about a dramatic change in the shopping habits of individuals and it was explained that this continued to have a profound effect upon the waste being generated. The Head of Operations and Neighbourhoods advised that Panel that general waste had increased by an average of 14 per cent since April. In addition, paper and cardboard waste; co-mingled waste; and food and garden waste had increased by 28 per cent, 29 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively. The overall recycling rate for Tameside had risen to 57 per cent and the Council was aiming to reach a target of 60 per cent.

Concern was expressed regarding the continued problem of contamination in blue bins intended for cardboard and paper. The contamination of paper and cardboard had reached a peak during July / August and Members were advised that any load with contamination over five per cent was rejected at the tipping facilities, in line with the contract with Suez. It was reported that some of the contamination had been malicious. Member enquired as to the work being undertaken to reduce contamination and it was explained that the Council continued to work with the Communications Team, bin lorry crews and the GMCA to highlight and tackle contamination. In particular, additional resources would be allocated to door knocking to enable engagement with residents to explain the issues associated with waste contamination.

It was reported that refuse and recycling working arrangements over the festive period had been updated on the Council's website. Bulky waste collections would be suspended for two weeks over Christmas as was normal but all other collections would be taking place with only minor and temporary adjustments to the schedule. The Council would be offering free Christmas tree collections and household waste recycling centres would remain open during the holidays.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

22. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

CHAIR