



Briefing paper on the Manchester City Council Climate Change Framework and Action Plan 2020-2025

by Climate Emergency Manchester and supporters, for the benefit of Councillors and citizens

Introduction	1
Disclaimers	2
Comments	2
Questions	3
1. Buildings	3
2. Energy	3
3. Transport	4
4. Finance	4
5. Engaging and empowering citizens	5
Recommendations	5
Next steps	5

Introduction

This briefing paper examines the Manchester City Council Climate Change Framework 2020-2025 and the Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2025, to be discussed at the Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee, Wednesday 4 March, 2020.

The briefing paper offers a first-look at a large amount of information made available to councillors and citizens only 3 working days before the Scrutiny Committee. This timeframe raises serious questions about the extent to which elected members can provide the necessary scrutiny of these important documents. Further concerns include:

- The **lack of pathway** for the vision set out in the city-wide framework. Although the framework offers a greater vision than previous papers, the documents do not set out any actions that demonstrate the route to get there.
- A shortage of creativity especially around potential **novel financing solutions** and other ways to overcome the significant challenges identified.

The briefing paper makes a number of recommendations. The top three are:

1. Bring back a fully-costed and quantified plan to NESC in July 2020
2. Pilot new solutions without waiting for central government, to show leadership
3. Investigate creative new financial products with both public and private providers

We welcome the increased use of tonnes, as well as quarterly reports on progress, but it is still not clear whether the emissions budget will be met by 2025 with the actions proposed.

Our questions and recommendations here focus on the Framework and Action Plan documents, and primarily on the City Council's emissions. This is not because we are only interested in scrutinising the Council's own emissions, but rather because the information and actions on city-wide emissions (many in Appendix 2) still lack consistent quantification. This makes it difficult to ask questions or make firm recommendations. The briefing paper is divided into three sections: comments, questions and recommendations.

Disclaimers

This briefing paper is not intended to pre-empt or undermine the role of Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee or the independence of its members. The questions are by no means an exhaustive list. After undertaking more detailed analysis of the plans we will be in a position to ask a further set of more detailed questions.

Comments

- There is greater a vision of a zero carbon city by 2038, but no pathway or even actions representing first steps of how partners will facilitate this.
- Much of the vision is a scaled-down version of the GM Environment Plan 2019-2024
- There is a lack of will to quickly pilot or implement actions and to learn by doing - this is the spirit of the Paris Agreement and would exhibit leadership regardless of national government developments. Far too many feasibility studies are promised for initiatives which have been rolled out elsewhere. This makes it look like there will be very little city-wide GHG reduction actions beyond grid decarbonisation in the next 2 years and therefore greater rates of reduction that are more difficult to achieve would be required. This is a significant risk to the credibility of the action plan.
- It is widely acknowledged that additional finance will be required to help residents reduce their footprints via home retrofit, renewables and EV vehicles. These will require creative new financial products with both public and private providers. There is nothing in this report mentioning if any avenues have been explored.
- There also appears to be a reliance on EU-funded projects related to city level action. This may be at risk due to Bbrexit.
- In the MCC Action Plan, there are some actions that have been quantified in tonnes of carbon (and we welcome this), but it's still not clear whether the emissions budget will be met by 2025 with the actions proposed. It also does not appear to be all fully costed.
- The city-wide budget for 2018-22 is 6.3tCO₂. It is not clear much of this has already been used based on best-estimates and how significant will the savings need to be to still meet the budget.

Questions

1. Buildings

- **p.24 of the Framework** sets out that all new development needs to be zero carbon by 2023 at the latest. Why is all new development not zero carbon from this point forth? Every new building 2020-2023 otherwise risks needing retrofitting later down the line.
- **p.24 of the Framework** wants to wait for the UK Government to establish national zero carbon definitions and methodologies. However, frameworks already exist and could be used in GM as an interim solution or pilot - has this been discussed or explored? For example, since March 2019 the UK Green Buildings Council has had a net zero carbon buildings framework definition.
<https://www.ukgbc.org/ukgbc-work/net-zero-carbon-buildings-a-framework-definition/>

2. Energy

- The Climate Action Plan suggests (under '**Capital**') that funding for a large scale energy generation scheme is dependent on the outcome of a feasibility study. This overlooks the fact that other Councils as well as the GM region have already evaluated <https://www.common-wealth.co.uk/reports/public-common-partnerships-building-new-circuits-of-collective-ownership> or introduced such schemes (notably Hackney Light and Power) and that sequencing in this way delays the issue. The Plan should make clear whether the Council are in favour of a large scale energy scheme and what type of ownership model they propose, rather than delaying by going through the process of another feasibility study. <https://hackney.gov.uk/hackney-light-and-power>
- **p.25 of the Framework** shows more ambition than previous documents around solar. However, the implications of decarbonising the natural gas grid are not thought through.
- The Action Plan repeatedly mentions 'phase 2 of Carbon Reduction Programme' without spelling out what this entails.

3. Transport

- **p.26 of the Action Plan** hopes to increase public transport use, but there is no metric. For example, an aim could be for 50% of journeys into the city centre at peak hours to be made using public transport.
- **p.26 of the Action Plan** also acknowledges that "the shift to electric vehicles won't address our problems with congestion" and shies away from steps to influence behaviour change around car usage.
- **p.17 of the Framework** gives Manchester residents a carbon budget of 6.6 million tonnes from 2020 What does this equate to per resident in real terms?

4. Finance

- The report appears to rely upon a lot of direction from central government especially on the need for standards (e.g. zero carbon buildings) and for greater levels of funding. Whilst this is understandable, this appears to be a risky approach to reducing emissions in line with the zero carbon the action plan and city-wide framework. This is not a demonstration of leadership and in a climate emergency situation we should not need to wait for central government direction or lose the ability to require creative new financial products with both public and private providers
- There is no mention of any creative funding solutions of whether any work as looked into creating novel financial products with the help of public or private financial institutions to tackle some of the issues highlighted.

- There appears to be some repetition and reliance on UK government schemes that are already planned, which may not benefit Manchester specifically as they are nationwide schemes.
- Many of the existing pilot schemes are reliant on European funding programmes, access to which is uncertain due to the brexit negotiations
- **Capital** section of Framework - mentions only £1m in Capital Fund although £15m will be needed for phase 2 of the buildings carbon reduction plan. Where will this be coming from and could all phases of this work be accelerated?

5. Engaging and empowering citizens

- The **Framework** mentions refreshed Ward Plans, but the relationship between the Ward Plans, the process of drafting these plans and these documents remains unclear. No document sets out whether engagement events have taken place in every ward, nor how those that have taken place have been advertised.

Recommendations

Manchester City Council should :

- **Quantify and cost all actions proposed** so that councillors can scrutinise in full
- **Make all new development net-zero from this point forth** to prevent the need for further retrofitting later down the line
- **Set out whether the Council is in favour of a large scale energy scheme** and what type of ownership model they propose
- **Introduce a metric for increased public transport use**, as the current aspiration will prove difficult to measure
- **Investigate creative new financial products with both public and private providers** to show leadership that does not depend on central government
- **Engage and empower citizens** by holding advertised events in all wards, and making the relationship between Ward Plans and the Climate Change Framework / Action Plan

What needs to happen within six months.

- In the next six months, NESC needs to receive a fully quantified and costed plan, and to receive these documents in sufficient time to undertake the necessary scrutiny.

Next steps

CEM and supporters will undertake more detailed analysis of the Framework and Action Plan documents.