



Briefing note on the “Manchester City Council Estates Decarbonisation”

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

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Introduction

This briefing note examines “[Manchester City Council Estates Decarbonisation](#)” (to be discussed at Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee, on Thursday November 11th 2021).

Disclaimers

This briefing paper is not intended to pre-empt or undermine the role of Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee or the independence of its members. The questions are by no means an exhaustive list.

Comments

- The report summary says “The projects described in this report that are currently in delivery are expected to achieve 74% of this target. If the set of projects described as ‘in development’ are delivered, this will achieve at least 92% of the target”

IF is a very big word. When will we know if all the projects in the set are on target? What is the contingency plan if they are not?

Questions

1 What bounce back of emissions is expected once council workers start using buildings again? What is being done about it?

“Emissions from energy use in Council buildings have reduced again in 20/21 compared to the same period the previous year; this has been driven by the installation of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy generation capacity, and further affected by the decarbonisation of the national grid and the changes to building use caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.”

2. Has the Council sold buildings in the last 3 years?

- In 2.1 you write “*316 buildings of varying age, condition and function are currently reported against, although this number does vary to account for acquisitions and disposals*”. Has the Council sold buildings in the last 3 years? If so, what buildings? What impact has this had on emissions of the Council? Are these buildings now in use by someone else, contributing to the city’s ongoing emissions?

3. Will the **gas-powered** Civic Quarter Heat Network ever switch from gas?

- In 3.15 “*The CHP unit will initially run on gas with the potential to introduce hydrogen into the mix in future to further reduce carbon emissions. The energy centre is currently completing final testing and commissioning and enters full operation in November 2021. The CQHN is forecast to reduce annual carbon emissions by 1,600 tCO₂.*”

Is this “potential” being actively explored by the Council? If so, by who, when will they report. If not, why not, and does the Council intend to do this or just keep dangling it as a potential carrot?

4. Have the carbon impacts of “major construction” been considered?

- You write in 3.16 that “*As part of the overall Estate Strategy, a number of major construction projects are underway*”
- All these are using cement, steel, require enormous amounts of energy. Are these carbon costs being calculated into the Council’s carbon budget? If not, why not?

Recommendations

General

A brief report on progress should be given every three months, with a major report, of at least this detail, against agreed baselines, every 6 months.

Specific

It’s great that you mention “*The Council had already adopted a science-based carbon budget for Manchester of 15 million tonnes of CO2 between 2018 and 2100 following analysis by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research. This also committed the city to become zero carbon by 2038 at the latest*”. Also perhaps mention that the city has now burned 6 million tonnes, 40% of its carbon budget for the entire 21st century, in the last three years alone.