

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 29 July 2022

Subject: GMCA Sustainability Strategy & Climate Emergency Update

Report of: Andy Burnham, GM Mayor and Eamonn Boylan, Chief Executive Officer,  
GMCA & TfGM

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### Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to seek approval for GMCA's organisational Sustainability Strategy (2022–26) and provide an update on the GMCA's Climate Emergency Declaration made in 2019.

The paper also provides the latest Member's Briefing to update on activities undertaken to deliver the GM 5 Year Environment Plan, launched in March 2019, for information. These updates are produced and distributed quarterly to GMCA Members and District Councillors.

### Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Approve the GMCA Sustainability Strategy (Appendix A) and
2. Note the progress made on GMCA's delivery of the GM 5 Year Environment Plan provided in the most recent Brief for Members (Appendix B).

### Contact Officers

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# Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Impacts Questionnaire		
Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion		
Health	G	Reduction in emissions and improved sustainability performance will deliver positive impacts at a local level - particularly in respect of air quality
Resilience and Adaptation	G	Improved organisational awareness of risks specific to GMCA in respect of climate change Likely improvement in GMCA resilience to a changing climate (as an organisation) given one priority focuses on climate resilience Strategy refers to improving organisational biodiversity and green space which could factor in green and blue infrastructure
Housing		
Economy		Strategy has a clear link to the GMFRS estates programme
Mobility and Connectivity		Strategy will emphasise the need for GMCA to maximise staff accessibility and capability to use active or public transport for commuting and business travel Strategy links to GMFRS B Fleet strategy and need to decarbonise where feasible
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	Reduction in emissions, in particular from transport, will have a positive impact on air quality Strategy focuses on environmental protection from GMCA activity - this factors in
Consumption and Production	A	Strategy outlines how we intend to tackle resource consumption from our own operation - this is an area that has had minimal focus in the past so this should be a positive step change Key to delivering the strategy is a significant estates programme that will require stringent mitigation measures to minimise construction waste and, where possible, recycle/reuse as many materials as possible Strategy outlines how we intend to tackle resource consumption from our own operation - this is an area that has had minimal focus in the past so this should be a positive step change Strategy refers to shifting, where feasible, to circular systems Strategy has a clear focus on reducing single use plastics from GMCA operations
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		The strategy outlines how GMCA intends to improve sustainability performance in its own operations including how we intend to reduce our scope 1 and 2 carbon footprint. Equally, the strategy intends to cover wider sustainability initiatives aligned with the 5YEP and other contractual duties such as the LCA Plan & Design Services Climate Emergency document
Further Assessment(s):		Carbon Assessment
	Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	 Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.
	Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	 Negative impacts overall.

## Risk Management

The GMCA Sustainability Strategy will be delivered by a cross Departmental steering group chaired by the Exec Director of Strategy. Without concerted effort and dedicated resources, there is a risk that the organisation will not achieve the targets set out in the Strategy. The Steering Group will be responsible for monitoring the progress of delivery and mitigating any risks.

## Legal Considerations

There are no legal implications of the recommendations set out within this report.

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

The Sustainability Strategy will require expenditure that is currently within the budget forecasts for 2022/23 for different Departments. Actions for future years may require additional funds. If so, these would be subject to a separate detailed business case being approved.

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

There are no capital consequences within the report for this year which are not being met by existing budgets or grants received from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme bid. Actions for future years will require additional funds. If so, these would be subject to a separate detailed business case being approved.

## **Number of attachments to the report: 2**

Appendix A: GMCA Sustainability Strategy 2022

Appendix B: Members Briefing – May 22

## **Background Papers**

Climate Emergency Motion – Paper to GMCA July 2019

## **Tracking/ Process**

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution

No

## **Exemption from call in**

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency? N/A

# 1. Background

- 1.1 GMCA declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26th July 2019 and has received regular progress reports since then. In the last progress report, Members were advised that the GMCA's Climate Emergency Plan would be replaced with a full Sustainability Strategy this year. This paper outlines the new GMCA Sustainability Strategy (2022-2026) which describes the actions required to decarbonise the GMCA's estate and operations in line with the carbon neutral by 2038 target and seeks approval for its publication (Appendix A).
- 1.2 The GMCA Sustainability Strategy 2022 – 2026 has been developed and approved by GMCA and GMFRS Senior Leadership in January 2022. The strategy sets out ambitions for the organisation in respect of sustainability and sets out priorities for action as well as a framework to facilitate the delivery of these priorities.
- 1.3 Prior to the development of the sustainability strategy 2022-2026, sustainability performance at GMCA has been driven via the GMFRS [sustainability strategy](#), published in 2014, which focused on 5 themed goals with targets set for 2020 and 2050. In 2019, the headline target for carbon was amended to reflect the organisation wide target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2038. Implementation of the previous strategy has successfully reduced GMFRS' carbon footprint by 44% by 2020 from the 2008/09 baseline.
- 1.4 Development of the sustainability strategy 2022-2026 has involved staff and key stakeholders from all areas of GMCA. NetPositive Futures were engaged to support initial strategy engagement sessions and delivery of materiality assessments with colleagues across the organisation to identify the most issues pivotal issues.

1.5 Materiality assessments, key strategies, legislation and contextual issues, relevant to all functions of GMCA, were assessed to ensure alignment of the strategy with key contextual documents, including the 5-Year Environment Plan for Greater Manchester and the LGA Climate Emergency: Fire & Rescue Services document. Additionally, peer review of sustainability strategies from various sectors was conducted to identify best practice in the development and delivery of sustainability strategies.

1.6 Following the development of a sustainability strategy framework, key stakeholders and wider staff groups were engaged to ensure relevant strategy content, in particular around the deliverables of the strategy, has been included as well as ensuring the correct balance between achievability and ambition.

## **2. GMCA Sustainability Strategy (2022-2026)**

2.1 The GMCA sustainability strategy will run until 2026 and covers the core activity of the GMCA and all sustainability impacts associated with this activity including:

- Activities delivered, and associated sustainability impacts from the GMCA head offices;
- Sustainability impacts arising from the assets operated by, and the activities delivered by, GMFRS;
- Sustainability impacts arising from activities undertaken and the assets directly operated by GMCA Waste & Resources Team, including closed landfill sites and other land assets.

The strategy does not cover the waste sites operated by Suez, Greater Manchester Police, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership or Greater Manchester Police.

2.2 The sustainability strategy has been developed around three key principles of sustainable action: people, planet and public purse. The strategy has an overarching ambition of GMCA being an organisation that is leading the way in delivering its own ambitions for Greater Manchester's environment with the long-term target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2038.

2.3 To drive performance, the strategy has 5 priorities which are:

- Rapidly cutting our carbon footprint
- Protecting and enhancing the environment
- Using our resources responsibly
- Adapting to the climate emergency
- Sustainability leadership

2.4 In order to deliver focused and tangible activity over the duration of the strategy, each priority has a short-term target for 2026. The ambition of the overall strategy is to deliver carbon neutrality by 2038. Given the scale of challenge that this poses, it is deemed appropriate to have stretching short-term targets to deliver focused action over the immediate future. The targets for 2026 are as follows:

- Reduce our scope 1 and 2 emissions by 50% (from the 2018/19 baseline);
- Fully embed environmental protection into emergency response activity;
- 80% of our supply chain will have a demonstrable commitment to our carbon neutrality target;
- Develop a climate change adaptation strategy based on future risks and opportunities;
- All staff to be trained in understanding the climate emergency and their role in tackling it.

2.5 The strategy has been delivered in a format whereby each priority is defined by the importance of the overall priority, how this relates to GMCA and how we intend to deliver on the priority. Also, each priority has been mapped against the UN Sustainable Development Goals to demonstrate contribution to the overall sustainability agenda as well as to assist colleagues in understanding why the priority has relevance and importance in a wider sustainability context.

2.6 The draft Sustainability Strategy is provided for comment and approval at Appendix A.

### **3. Governance and Delivery**

3.1 Peer review of successful sustainability strategies, as well as previous experience from the GMFRS sustainability strategy, outlines the significance of Senior Leadership responsibility over the overall strategy. As a result, it is recommended that the GMCA Chief Executive is the Senior Responsible Officer for the sustainability strategy.

- 3.2 To ensure effective leadership from all areas of the organisation, the forewords of the strategy have been covered by both the GMCA Chief Executive and the GMFRS Chief Fire Officer.
- 3.3 Given the strategy's duration, it is important to ensure continuous delivery and activity in all strategy areas. As a result, it is proposed that the strategy will be underpinned by annual delivery plans built around the 5 key priorities of the strategy to ensure appropriate evaluation methods and appropriate delivery resources are assigned.
- 3.4 In order to support sustainability action following the launch of the strategy, the Sustainability Strategy Steering Group has been established. The steering group involves key stakeholders who will support delivery and monitoring of annual delivery plans and overall sustainability strategy ambitions. The GMCA Chief Executive has assigned the steering group leadership responsibility to the Executive Director of Policy and Strategy.
- 3.5 Working groups have also been established, each individually sponsored by an Director level member of staff, to monitor progress under each priority area of the strategy. The working groups will feedback progress, opportunities and issues into the overall sustainability strategy steering group.
- 3.6 The 2026 targets for the sustainability strategy will be embedded within the ISO 14001 certified Environmental Management System (EMS) and covered within a refreshed environmental policy for GMCA to ensure that effective monitoring is entrenched in our day-to-day activity and supported by Senior Leadership. Equally, effectiveness of our delivery against the targets will be assessed via a dedicated internal and external audit process.

## **4. Performance Monitoring and Reporting**

- 4.1 Monthly Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are already established for monitoring scope 1 and 2 emissions which are the components measured as part of the overall

carbon neutrality and strategy carbon reduction targets. These KPI's are also reported on a quarterly basis.

- 4.2 Bi-annual sustainability performance reports will be produced to detail activity under each priority area of the sustainability strategy whilst we will also produce an annual carbon footprint report and, where feasible, endeavour to extend the scope of the carbon footprint measurement into scope 3 emissions, which are emissions that occur within the GMCA value chain.
- 4.3 An annual EMS management review will also be undertaken with Senior Leadership to ensure transparent reporting of progress against the sustainability strategy and ensure Senior Leadership are in a position to influence all elements of sustainability performance.

## **5. Resources**

- 5.1 The sustainability strategy features a significant commitment to deliver a wide range of activity that will ensure the organisation progresses rapidly over the forthcoming years and displays leadership in the regional and national context.
- 5.2 In order to progress the actions outlined within the strategy and achieve its' intended outcomes, an increase in financial and human resources will be required in future years. Current resource directly attributed to delivery of the sustainability strategy is 1.8 FTE based within the GMFRS sustainability team and a GMFRS sustainability capital budget of approximately £75,000 per year plus limited revenue budget. The sustainability team at GMFRS is also set to expand by 1 FTE in 2022/23 with budget identified. Additionally, the GMFRS sustainability team, have successfully acquired approximately £780,000 of the £78m public sector decarbonisation scheme (PSDS) funding allocated to GM and are currently delivering solar PV, battery storage and LED lighting projects with this grant fund. Further PSDS funding has been acquired as part of GM PSDS phase 3 bid. GMFRS has also applied for part of the GM Low Carbon Skills Funding bid with a decision due in August 2022.
- 5.3 The GMFRS estates programme is a key activity that will facilitate carbon reduction with activity focusing on two elements: low carbon retrofit (including via station minor or major refurbishment) and new build fire stations. Targets have been established

for this activity with new builds targeting an 'A+' rated EPC (building generates more energy than it consumes) and refurbishments targeting an 'A' rated EPC. 'A' rated EPC may not always be achievable for every site given certain constraints but, nevertheless, refurbishment activity is highly likely to deliver a significant carbon reduction. Equally, there is an intention for any refurbishment or new build activity to no longer install fossil fuel heating systems as a means of progressing carbon reduction activity. The current estates programme features 5 new builds (including the merger of Stockport and Whitehill), 3 heavy refurbishments, 4 light refurbishments and 5 low carbon upgrades during the proposed duration of the sustainability strategy.

- 5.4 Equally, a number of strategy's actions will require collaborative working and lead actions from Directorates aside from GMFRS sustainability team, with potential budget to support. Currently, it is unlikely that a wide range of Directorates will be able to deliver this activity without dedicated support from colleagues with sustainability expertise. As a result, it is intended that a resource mapping exercise is conducted by the Sustainability Strategy Steering Group.

## **6. Delivery of the 5 Year Environment Plan**

6.1 As part of the GMCA's leadership role on sustainability, GMCA is also leading on the delivery of Greater Manchester's 5 Year Environment Plan, with an objective to achieve carbon neutrality by 2038. The 5 Year Environment Plan is being delivered through a mission based approach, reporting in to the GMCA via the Green City Region Partnership, now led by Cllr Cox.

6.2 Members on the Green City Region partnership are updated on progress delivery every quarter through detailed performance monitoring reports. Wider Members are briefed via a quarterly newsletter. The latest quarterly newsletter is attached for information (Appendix B).

## **7. Recommendations**

7.1 The GMCA is requested to:

1. Approve the GMCA Sustainability Strategy (Appendix A) and

2. Note the progress made on GMCA's delivery of the GM 5 Year Environment Plan provided in the most recent Brief for Members (Appendix B).