

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Subject: Five Year Environment Plan 2025 – 2030

Report of: Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Lead for Green City Region and Sue Johnson, Portfolio Chief Executive for Green City Region

---

### Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present the penultimate draft of the next Greater Manchester Five Year Environment Plan (2025-30) for approval, to provide an overview of the process undertaken to develop the Plan and the next steps prior to publication and launch in December 2024.

### Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Approve the Greater Manchester Five Year Environment Plan (Annex 01).
2. Note the development process and next steps for its' professional design, publication and launch at the Green Summit on 9<sup>th</sup> December.
3. Note the Greater Manchester Climate Risk Assessment as a technical appendix to the Plan (Annex 02)
4. Note that the co-benefits sustainability assessment of the Plan is positive.

### Contact Officers

Name of key contact Officer and email address to be included

[Mark.Atherton@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Atherton@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

[Robyn.Smith@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:Robyn.Smith@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

# Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

## Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

The overall assessment of the Five Year Environment Plan is positive. The plan contains measures which will reduce the city region's carbon emissions, improve biodiversity and air quality and reduce the risks from the likely impacts of climate change all whilst supporting economic growth and citizen wellbeing.

## Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion	G	A separate ED assessment has been carried out. There are actions in the plan which promote a just transition to low carbon economy although the main impacts are around how the plan is delivered rather than specific actions within the plan.
Health	G	Improved health through increased activity, improved housing quality and natural environment and air quality
Resilience and Adaptation	G	Specific Aim to reduce climate risks with associated actions
Housing	G	Specific Aim to improve housing quality and reduce emissions from homes
Economy	G	Specific Aim to grow the local economy through supporting clean sector development and support skills development.
Mobility and Connectivity	G	Specific Aim to increase active and public travel and support uptake of ultra low emission vehicles
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	Specific Aims to reduce carbon emissions from energy, buildings and transport and improve local nature recovery
Consumption and Production	G	Specific Aim to increase sustainable consumption and production and circular economy

Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target	This plan is specifically designed to support Greater Manchester to move, over the next 5 years, towards carbon neutrality by 2038
---	--

### Further Assessment(s):

Equalities Impact Assessment and Carbon Assessment

G

Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.

A

Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.

R

Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.

RR

Negative impacts overall.

## Carbon Assessment

Overall Score



### Buildings

#### Result

#### Justification/Mitigation

New Build residential		The plan defers to P4E standards. It sets out the ambition to move away from fossil fuel based heating systems. It contains an action to use the Embodied Carbon Calculator to specify and procure retrofit and new build materials. The plan aims to create an intergrated transport system which will improve access to all amenities. The plan aims to improve provision of onsite renewable energy across all building types.
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance		A specific Aim focusing on retrofit of existing public, commercial and residential buildings. There are targets to raise EPCs to C or above across all building types
New build non-residential (including public) buildings		Defers to standards set in P4E, suggests delivering higher sustainability standards for some new build e.g. PAS2080. The plan sets out the ambition to move away from fossil fuel heating systems. There is an action to use the Embodied Carbon Calculator to specify and procure retrofit and new build materials. The plan aims to create an intergrated transport system which will improve access to all amenities; there are actions to increase access to EV charging points and to improve provision of cycling facilities within workplaces. The plan aims to improve provision of onsite renewable energy across all building types.

### Transport

Active travel and public transport		A specific aim to improve transport with a focus on supporting development of Bee Network
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access		A specific Aim and multiple actions to support the Local Transport Plan
Access to amenities		Contains actions to deliver better access to natural environment, employment and other services.
Vehicle procurement		Actions to promote decarbonisation of Local Authority fleet and company cars. Local Authorities, businesses, logistics companies and other organisations are encouraged to switch fleet to electric.

### Land Use

Land use		The plan sets out objectives to better manage existing green spaces for nature and a key aim of the plan is to improve biodiversity. Impact assessment is considered across the plan. Specific programmes of work for creating new habitat included eg Green Spaces Fund. Overall the plan will have a positive impact on protected species by creating new land for wildlife and protecting existing land.
----------	--	---

No associated carbon impacts expected.

High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.

Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.

Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.

Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

## **Risk Management**

The main risks associated with publishing the plan are reputational if we fail to deliver it. In the longer term, failure to address global carbon emissions and the decline in nature will impact on the social and economic wellbeing of Greater Manchester and its residents.

## **Legal Considerations**

This is a non-statutory plan and the targets are not legally binding. Some of the targets set out in the Five Year Environment Plan are consistent with other plans that are or will be subject to public consultation (e.g. for Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Local Transport Plan).

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

Where possible, the Local Authority revenue implications of delivering the Plan have been estimated against each action.

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

The capital implications of the plan will be difficult to estimate as they will be spread across different sectors. A Strategic Outline Business Case of our Local Area Energy Plans suggest that a full low carbon transition may cost £64bn by 2038 however 70% of this would have been required under business as usual scenarios.

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

Two attachments – Five Year Environment Plan 2025-2030 & Climate Change Risk Assessment

## **Background Papers**

The First Five Year Environment Plan, published in 2019, can be viewed here [Five-Year Environment Plan - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

The latest progress report can be viewed here under item 9 [Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

## **Tracking/ Process**

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

## **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? - No

## **Bee Network Committee**

TBC

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

25<sup>th</sup> September 2024

# 1. Introduction/Background

1.1 The first Five Year Environment Plan (5YEP) was published in 2019. It set out the ambition for Greater Manchester to become a carbon neutral city region by 2038. Alongside publishing the plan, a climate emergency was declared by GMCA and the ten Local Authorities and, in 2021, a biodiversity emergency was also declared.

1.2 The first 5YEP ran from 2019 – 2024 and focused on five key priority areas: energy supply, transport and travel, homes and buildings, production and consumption, and the natural environment. The previous plan set out how we would tackle the environmental challenges we face, meet our environmental responsibilities, and secure our economic future and wellbeing.

1.3 Since 2019 there has been significant progress made against the actions in the 5YEP, a strong foundation for future progress has been laid. However, our carbon emissions are falling too slowly to align with our science based target, consistent with the Paris (COP21) Climate Agreement, and our natural environment is still in decline. Urgent and accelerated action is needed by all of us to reduce our carbon emissions and reverse the decline in biodiversity by 2030. An overview of the progress made since 2019 can be seen in Appendix 2 of the plan and will be summarised as infographics within the report, prior to publication.

1.4 Alongside the development of the Five Year Environment Plan, a Greater Manchester Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) has also been produced as a Technical Annex to the Plan (see Annex 02). A summary of the CCRA's findings is included within the main Plan. The highest magnitude risks for Greater Manchester by 2050<sup>1</sup> include:

- Risks and opportunities for natural carbon stores, carbon sequestration and GHG emissions from changing climatic conditions, including temperature change, water scarcity and wildfires
- Risks to infrastructure networks (water, energy, transport, ICT) from cascading failures
- Risks to infrastructure services from river, surface water and groundwater flooding

---

<sup>1</sup> Assuming a 2°C end-of-century global warming level, compared to pre-industrial levels

- Risks to health and wellbeing from high temperatures
- Risks to people, communities and buildings from flooding and storms

1.5 In recognition of these challenges, the new Environment Plan contains an Aim to ensure our city region is better adapted and more resilient to the increasing impacts of climate change.

## 2. New Five Year Environment Plan

2.1 Reaching our environmental goals will require significant changes across all sections of society in how we live, travel and work – from individuals and communities to businesses and the public sector. Road transport and domestic heating are the two largest sources of carbon emissions in Greater Manchester. Achieving reductions in these areas is key to achieving carbon neutrality.

2.2 The new 5YEP will run from 2025-30 and builds on the previous ambitions and progress against the first plan. The commitment to be a carbon neutral city region by 2038 remains and the urgency of the climate and biodiversity emergency is reiterated. It is important to note that the carbon budget set under the first plan is likely to soon be exceeded, however we believe that this budget should be maintained as a benchmark against which to measure our fair and equitable share of global carbon emissions. Whilst now very challenging, we still believe that carbon neutrality by 2038 is still possible, especially if national measures are accelerated to align with the Climate Change Committees carbon budget.

2.3 The new plan has eight key Aims:

- Our **energy infrastructure** is smart, flexible and fit for a low carbon future.
- Our **buildings** are sustainable and energy efficient.
- Our **transport** system is reliable, integrated, inclusive, affordable and enables active and sustainable **travel**.
- Our **natural environment** is enhanced, providing benefits people, economy and nature.
- Our city region transitions to a **circular economy** and our **waste** is reduced, reused, recycled or recovered.
- Our city-region is better **adapted** and more **resilient** to the increasing impacts of climate change.

- Our **air quality** enhances the health, well-being and quality of life of the city region.
- Our **economy** will grow sustainably because of the interventions we make to benefit both our residents and businesses.

2.4 Underneath each of these Aims sit key objectives which are the shorter term results needed to make progress towards the longer term Aim. Wherever feasible, we have assigned a 5 year target to each objective. Each of these Aims form a chapter within the plan. Each chapter outlines the challenge specific to that area, the actions required over the next five years, the co-benefits of delivering each aim and factors that will either enable or inhibit delivery e.g. finance and skills deficits.

2.5 A key focus of the plan has been to ensure that it better reflects the action needed from all sectors of society across Greater Manchester, showing public sector action as just one part of the journey to 2038, alongside private, third sector and citizen action. The plan also includes enabling actions which will support decision makers to make an environmentally conscious choice.

2.6 Work has also been undertaken with ARUP to develop a GM specific carbon emissions pathway to 2038. More detail on this can be seen in Section 5 of the Plan. We have utilised the best data we have available however, there are some gaps, particularly for industrial emissions, where estimations have been made. The carbon pathways are aligned to the targets set out in the energy, buildings and transport sections of the Plan. We have defined the targets to be challenging but achievable, based on working assumptions of both the funding we are likely to receive through devolution and the potential uptake of actions by decision makers e.g. home owner-occupiers and private sector landlords. It is possible that some of these targets could increase following decisions on devolution deal funding and national government announcements in the spring spending review.

2.7 The modelling shows that by 2038, Greater Manchester may still have 3.9MtCO<sub>2e</sub> remaining as a result of the measures identified in the plan (0.5 MtCO<sub>2e</sub> is the target for carbon neutrality). Whilst this does consider anticipated growth in future energy demand and some decarbonisation of the wider energy system, it does not take into account recent government proposals to bring forward the full decarbonisation of the electricity grid to 2030, to ban installation of gas boilers in new buildings from 2027 and



the bringing forward the Internal Combustion Engine Vehicles (ICEV) ban for new sales from 2030. Nor does it currently account for Government's recent announcement to set a new target for 81% net zero emissions by 2035. These and other changes can be incorporated into future iterations of the model. Reaching carbon neutral by 2038 will require additional national and local actions to be delivered over the next 14 years.

2.8 A number of targets set out in the Plan mirror those set out in other GM plans and strategies e.g. the natural environment and transport targets are reflective of those set out in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and developing Local Transport Plan. Both of these documents will be subject to public consultation. It is therefore suggested that the current targets in the Environment plan are reviewed in 12 month's time.

### **3. Development Process**

4.1 To develop the plan, officers initially reflected on the previous plan including review of the vision, priorities and the progress made after five years of delivery. A key lesson learnt from the previous plan is that the rate of carbon emission reduction will largely be determined by the choices that businesses and individuals make, significantly influenced by national policies. We have therefore structured the plan to focus on these decision makers and how public bodies and our partners can enable them to make more sustainable choices. Increasing engagement with these decision makers will be essential over the next five years.

4.2 Other key changes from the first plan include the addition of Aims on air quality and sustainable growth, the latter to align with the emerging Greater Manchester Local Growth Plan. We have also described what the journey to a nature rich and carbon neutral city region will involve, with a detailed assessment of the further support we will need from national government in terms of policy and funding.

4.3 To develop the Local Authority led aspects within the plan, several surveys were conducted at an officer and councillor level. Feedback from the surveys has particularly informed the Local Authority led actions. Local Authorities face particular challenges

around financing and resourcing the more ambitious actions in the plan. This has been reflected in the wording of the actions.

4.4 Following internal development, initial engagement with external partners began to further develop the new Vision, Aims and Objectives for the new plan through existing Challenge Groups. External engagement has continued throughout the development process and a key focus has been developing those actions outside of Local Authority control. External organisations have been encouraged to feedback on the specific actions for their sector/organisation.

3.5 In addition to engaging with external partners, the plan in its initial stages has been presented to the equalities panel, the Youth Combined Authority, GM Bee Net Zero Board, GM Business Board and specific interest groups e.g. Sustainable Energy Association and GM clean growth sector businesses. Various drafts of the document have also been circulated to our Local Authorities and have been endorsed through Scrutiny and the Green City Region Partnership and Board.

## **5. Next Steps**

5.1 The Plan is currently undergoing professional design, prior to publication. This includes design of infographics, charts and tables which are still to be inserted in to the final version.

5.2 The plan recognises that, to be successful, we need to put people at the heart of our plans and help to develop the skills, knowledge and leadership that will enable them to support the pathway to 2038 and benefit from it. Going forward, Greater emphasis will therefore be placed on engaging with the people and businesses of Greater Manchester on our shared vision for the future, listening to their concerns and

aspirations and giving them the support and encouragement they need on the journey towards a nature rich and carbon neutral city region.

5.3 Following GMCA approval and any final amendments required (e.g. for design), the Five Year Environment Plan will be launched publicly at the annual Green Summit on the 9<sup>th</sup> December.