Sustainability & Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee

19 October 2022

Cllr Majid Mahmood - Cabinet Member for Environment - Priorities 2022

Green City and Climate Change

- **Green City – Working with partners to develop a strategy for sustainability, liveability, and environmental improvement for the city.**

- **Climate Change - Engaging in proactive citywide and national policy development to tackle the causes and consequences of climate change**

Upgrading our 60,000 social homes to make them warmer, greener, and cheaper to heat, meeting our Route to Zero plan.

- The Route to Net Zero team is working closely with City Housing colleagues to identify, scale and coordinate retrofit activities in a bid to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. This will include support for the supply chain to scale up as part of the City's wider strategy for the decarbonisation of all homes in the city.
- The team is also working with Corporate Property on a bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to secure funding to replace gas boilers with renewable technologies and secure energy efficiency improvements in City Council owned buildings.
- Existing retrofit projects follow a national government (grant funding) strategy that seeks to raise the energy efficiency of low-income and low EPC (E, F&G) rated social housing homes to EPC C by 2030. There are proposals for all private rented properties to meet an EPC C standard by 2025 and for all homes to be EPC C level by 2035 at the latest.
- The cost of retrofitting the entirety of the Councils circa 60,000 homes has been estimated to be as much as £3.6bn over 30 years. Sourcing the funds and planning to address this is a significant challenge.
- 3 Cities retrofit programme, this includes a commitment to retrofit Birmingham's social housing portfolio and catalyse investment in private sector housing across the City. The scheme is a unique collaboration between Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton is leading the way in unlocking transformative opportunities on housing retrofit. The 3 Cities Retrofit aims to develop an integrated programme reflecting the diversity of needs and housing portfolios of each city. The scale - 700,000 homes including 165,000 social housing properties - combined with regional and city expertise, offers a single-entry point for partners and investors.
- City housing is currently supporting the delivery of the Energy Companies Obligation 4 (ECO) and LADS. ECO is a government energy efficiency scheme for Great Britain, administered by Ofgem, with the objective of improving the least energy efficient housing stock occupied by low income and vulnerable households and LADS is the Local Authority Delivery which is also aimed at low income owner occupiers.

- We are currently consulting with stakeholders internally and externally to agree and establish key priorities for the Housing Strategy following the latest Strategic Housing Needs assessment, leading to Cabinet report by end of the Calendar year. The Housing Strategy will also bring together a range of related strategies including homeless prevention strategy, supported housing strategy, and private rented strategy etc.

Planting thousands of trees so that at least 25% of our city has tree cover and establishing 400 more green spaces and parks, including a new park in the heart of our city centre.

- The natural environment is integral to our existence and is the keystone for sustaining life on earth. Climate change is impacting not only our lives but more importantly the ecosystems that sustain us. Ensuring that the natural environment around us is in a healthy state is vital if it is to continue to sustain life and provide the climate adaptation benefits, we need.
- This summer saw record temperatures across the UK and these were felt more acutely in our cities where temperatures overnight fall very little creating Urban Heat Islands. Urban cooling provided by the natural process of green spaces and trees can significantly help reduce these temperatures reducing health risks and making a more liveable environment.
- Our Urban Forest Master Plan 2021 – 2051 sets out a number of measures we need to take to ensure that the trees within the city can continue to provide those benefits; and our work on canopy cover has identified areas of the city most impacted and where we need to prioritise new tree planting. This winter will see around an additional 20,000 trees planted in parks, green spaces, and streets to maintain and expand our tree cover into the future.
- Earlier this year the City of Nature 25-year plan was adopted. This plan sets out a series of measures to ensure that our existing green spaces are well managed to provide quality accessible spaces that are well used, promoting physical and mental health benefits and are biodiverse and resilient meeting the challenges of climate change. The plan also looks at the distribution of accessible green space across the city and sets this out in an Environmental Justice assessment. This view identifies those areas of the city that have low levels of accessible green space and are at a higher risk of the impacts of climate change such as Urban Heat island and increased flooding as well as impacts on human health and well-being.
- 34 parks across the 5 most impacted wards have been identified for intervention over the next 5 years starting with parks in Bordesley and Highgate. This winter work will be undertaken to enhance the natural environment and improve access and opportunities for physical activity.
- Across the city but specifically along the River Rea (and its tributaries) and the River Cole work has been undertaken to improve connectivity for wildlife and water quality by removing man made obstructions. As part of this works re profiling of the river channels also has a number of benefits, re naturalising the channel helps increase the capacity to hold storm water but also slows the flow. These measures help reduce the risk of localised flooding of roads, businesses, and homes.
- Commencing this autumn work is starting on identifying our Local Nature Recovery Network which is linked to the requirements of Biodiversity Net Gain set out in the Environment Act 2021. This Network will identify locations that are the most important for biodiversity and the delivery of essential climate regulating ecosystem

services. In turn we will use the planning system to lever investment in these spaces and identify gaps in the network where new open space is needed for both delivery of climate adaptation and environmental justice for those local communities.

Developing a green, affordable, and reliable bus and public transport system and making it easy and safe for people to walk and cycle around our city.

- The adopted Birmingham Transport Plan (2031) outlines how the city's transport system needs to be transformed to meet the challenges of the next decade.
- The four principles of the Plan are: reallocating road space, transforming the city centre, prioritising active travel in local neighbourhoods and managing demand through parking measures.
- The vision is for a sustainable, green, inclusive, go-anywhere transport network. Creating safe and healthy environments that make walking, cycling and active travel the first choice for people making short journeys. For longer trips, a fully integrated, high-quality public transport system will be the go-to choice.
- Reallocating road space away from private cars includes the introduction of bus lanes and tram lines, in addition to reallocating the space to sustainable modes or other uses, such as parklets. Examples of such schemes include the introduction of a segregated cycle lane on Bradford Street, the new tram line on Broad Street, and the construction of Spring routes on the A34 and A45.
- The city centre will be transformed through the creation of a network of pedestrianised streets, new public squares and parks in order to prioritise people and support walking and cycling as the main means of getting around. Examples of such schemes include the City Centre Traffic Segments, Southside public realm (delivered June 2022) and Snowhill public realm improvements (delivered from December 2021 until March 2022).
- Creating local environments where walking and cycling is prioritised, we can limit care use and decrease carbon emissions. A limit of 20mph will be standard on all local roads in order to end the dominance of cars in local neighbourhoods and improve air quality. Examples of such schemes include the Places of People projects implemented in several local areas and School Streets projects implemented at 12 primary schools.

Reducing waste and improving our rates of recycling.

- The waste service has introduced 4 mobile recycling centres. These are mobile Household Recycling Centres that travel to various locations around the City providing opportunities for residents to bring waste and large recycling items.
- A reuse centre has been established at James Road, Tyseley and all HRCs now have collection points for items too good to throw away. These items are then taken to the reuse centre, reconditioned and put up for sale. Starter packs of these goods have been developed for residents in need.
- New recycling streams are being developed for items such as hard plastic, paint and coffee pods.
- A sorting initiative has been introduced to the HRCs to check and segregate waste taken to the centres. The journey of recycling will be displayed at all HRCs.

- A contamination analysis of collected waste has commenced and this once completed will be followed by a communications plan to explain to residents what can and cannot be recycled.
- A recycling pilot for tower blocks is being planned.

Expanding our use of renewable energy.

- Use of Heat pumps and decarbonised district heating for domestic and non-domestic estates.
- Significant funding has been secured from BEIS to support the BDEC decarbonisation roadmap for the city centre district heating network and BCC is working collaboratively with other BDEC partners Birmingham Women's & Children's Hospitals, Network Rail and Aston University to create an investable and deliverable plan.
- The City is part of the BEIS decarbonisation of heat programme which will prepare business cases for deliverable projects to decarbonise heat across the public sector estate, and work to explore the use of heat network zoning.
- The Council is also working with the Energy and Bioproducts Research Institute (EBRI) at Aston University on a biochar trial, which will use woody arisings from BCC tree stock in new tree plantings and other horticultural situations. A biochar trial is to be delivered in partnership with EBRI. Biochar, when produced from woody material and incorporated into soils, not only locks carbon away more effectively but has significant benefits in terms of plant resilience and growth.
- Hydrogen generation not just for transport (i.e. hydrogen buses, potentially heavy fleet vehicles), but for heating purposes with external partners.
- Expanding solar panels for roofs on domestic and non-domestic properties by requiring all new developments to install a form of low or zero carbon energy generation.
- Electric vehicles to replace petrol/diesel fleet vehicles.

Ensuring that Council's procurement, loans and borrowing have high environmental, social and governance standards.

- In respect of procurement considerations the Council has a formally adopted Social Value Policy and accompanying Social Value Charter - Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility downloads | Birmingham City Council. This provides a robust set of policies and procedures to ensure its procurement processes demonstrate probity, adherence to procurement legislation and commitment to deliver best value for every pound the Council spends.
- By incorporating the requirement for environmental and Social Value commitments into all tenders the Council seeks to work with its supply chain partners to maximise all opportunities available to deliver benefits to the citizens its serves.

Creating a comprehensive network of electric car charging points around our city.

- Projections predict that there may be over 170,000 EVs in Birmingham by 2030, of which, over 153,000 would be cars. To meet the charging demand from these

vehicles, there would need to be around 3,630 public accessible charge points. The Charge Point Strategy City-Wide Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy sets out the approach to deployment for this level of charge points numbers being through both the public and private sector.

- OLEV funding was sourced to enable the first phase of 197 chargers/394 fast and rapid charge points, as part of the12-year Birmingham Charge Point Strategy to support the transition to EVs but aligning with the Council's Transport Policy objectives to achieve at least 40% modal shift to public transport, walking and cycling, by deploying a minimum of 3,600 charge points by 2032 in line with market growth.
- The Council's procured EV Network Development Partner is focussing roll out on the highway, public car parks, parks, and leisure centres, working in collaboration with TFWM on their park & ride sites, alongside other private sector developments in supermarkets, retail outlets, entertainment centres and other places of destination.
- A combined public and private sector approach as part of the EV strategy adopted by the Council in November 2021, will enable future EV charge point developments to address strategic network delivery as well as prioritising more challenging areas where there is little or no off-street parking.