

Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2016

Present:

Councillor Peel – In the Chair

Councillors Azra Ali, Chohan, Hughes, S.Judge, Kirkpatrick, Leech, Longsdon, Ludford, Paul, Rawson, Sadler and Sheikh

Councillor N Murphy, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

Councillor B Priest, Deputy Leader

Apologies: Councillors Marshall and Noor

NESC/16/05 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2016 as a correct record.

NESC/16/06 Selective Licensing Pilot - Public Consultation

The Committee considered the report submitted by the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) and the Strategic Director (Development). The report described that the Housing Act 2004 gave the Council the power to introduce the licensing of private rented homes within a designated area, with the aim of improving the management and condition of these properties to ensure they have a positive impact on the neighbourhood.

The report described that one of the main themes of the Council's Market Rental Strategy is to support the professionalisation of the Private Rented Sector by improving property and management conditions. Licensing is one of the initiatives that can be utilised alongside other intensive neighbourhood management processes.

Members were informed that Officers had used neighbourhood typologies and local intelligence to identify areas that meet the criteria to designate a selective licensing area; this included low housing demand linked to property condition and high levels of antisocial behaviour, crime and deprivation.

The Committee was informed that Officers are seeking approval to commence a consultation exercise to establish whether the declaration of a selective licensing scheme is required within the identified areas. The Committee was invited to comment upon this strategy prior to its submission to the Executive.

The Director of Housing introduced the report across its broad themes. He said that following comments from members the maps contained within the report are to be reviewed prior Executive and to consultation. He said that following the consultation period it is planned that Crumpsall would be the first area to introduce a Selective

Licensing Scheme with the other three areas being rolled out after that, subject to the outcome of the consultation exercise.

The Committee welcomed Councillor Priest, Deputy Leader. Cllr Priest said that following the motion at Council asking for consideration to be given to introducing Selective Licensing to address issues of poor management in the Private Rented Sector he was initially sceptical. However he said that by using Selective Licensing as part of a suite of interventions to address issues of poor management practices in a targeted and considered way, this will allow for outcomes to be measured in a meaningful way. He said that poor quality landlords undermine the quality of life for their tenants and this has a detrimental effect on the wider community and undermines the ambitions of the Council. He said that the Committee will receive updates regarding the implementation of this scheme.

In response to a comment from a member the Director of Housing explained that the previous Selective Licensing Scheme had relied on Landlords coming forward and applying for a license, whereas the authority now has improved access to Land Registry records, in addition to Council Tax records to more easily identify landlords and their address. He said that this will make identifying landlords much easier and avoid evasion. He said that previously enforcement action taken against those landlords who failed to apply for a license had been by way of a fine levied by the Courts. He said that this process had been very time consuming however changes in legislation will allow for a penalty charge to be issued rather than a fine. He said that this process should be quicker and that any money generated from the issuing of a penalty charge will remain with the council.

Decisions

1. The Committee supported the recommendation that the Executive;

Approve a consultation with residents, private landlords, businesses and other stakeholders to designate selective licensing schemes within the geographical areas highlighted in this report.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation, delegate authority to the Director of Housing and the City Treasurer in consultation with the Deputy Leader with responsibility for Housing and Regeneration and the Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources to approve up to 4 selective licensing areas identified in the report.

2. The Committee request that an update report on the implementation of Selective Licensing be submitted for consideration at an appropriate time.

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2. The Committee request that an update report on the implementation of Selective Licensing be submitted for consideration at an appropriate time.

NESC/16/07 Waste Collection and Disposal Savings

The Committee considered the report submitted by the Director of Neighbourhoods and the Strategic Lead, Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing. The report was presented in two sections. The first report provided a detailed update on the performance of the Biffa contract and activity of the City's Strategic Waste Team to improve performance and minimise the cost of disposal. The second report proposed major waste collection service changes designed to reduce the cost of waste disposal. The Committee was invited to comment upon the major waste collection service changes prior to its submission to the Executive.

The Committee considered the first report. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods introduced the report across its broad themes. He said that he and officers are working closely with Biffa to improve the service provided to improve the physical environment of neighbourhoods. He said that performance is regularly reviewed to monitor performance. A member commented that he would have expected a representative from Biffa to be in attendance at the meeting. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods replied saying that Biffa had attended a number of meetings of the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group. He further suggested that if the Committee agreed, representatives could be invited to future meeting of the Committee when this item is to be discussed again. The Committee agreed this recommendation.

In response to a members question regarding the reporting of jobs and the lack of follow up information the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said that if people use the 'Your Account' section on the Council's web site this will allow residents to log and monitor any jobs reported.

The Strategic Lead, Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing responded to a members comment regarding an incident in his ward when rubbish had not been removed despite reporting this several times. He said that staff supervision and absenteeism had been identified as an issue and Biffa are addressing this through staff training. He said that improvements in staff supervision will address the issues raised by members such as bins being left half emptied and bins not being left outside of the correct properties. He further said that if there are specific 'hot spots' caused by the timings of street cleaning they will try and resolve this with Biffa.

The Strategic Lead, Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing said that he was confident that the street cleaning issues that had arisen in the city centre in the period before Christmas last year would not happen again. In response to a

members question he clarified that formal complaints are those complaints submitted via the formal corporate complaints procedure.

A member commented that Committee will continue to monitor performance activity and recommended that to assist this a Quarterly Performance Dashboard report is submitted to the Committee for information. This report will contain performance data on the Biffa contract and activity of the City's Strategic Waste Team. The member recommended that this first report is to be submitted to the October meeting of the Committee. The Committee agreed this recommendation.

The Committee then considered the second report that proposed major waste collection service changes designed to reduce the cost of waste disposal. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods introduced the report. He said the city had spent £36 million on waste disposal in 2015/16 and this figure is expected to rise over the next few years due to inflationary pressures on the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority, population growth forecasts and a levelling out of the City's recycling rate. The City collects approximately 171,000 tonnes of waste each year with only 32% recycled. Whilst this figure is much higher than the 18.8% rate in 2009/10 prior to the change to alternate weekly collections, it is the lowest rate amongst Greater Manchester authorities, which means the City has the highest disposal costs.

He further said that although recycling rates had improved over the previous five years, recycling rates had levelled out. He said that this improvement and levelling off of Manchester's recycling rate broadly mirrors the national picture. He said that to achieve the required savings target of £2.4 million in reduced disposal costs in 2016/17 doing nothing was simply not an option. He said that he recognised that the proposals will be challenging for some residents; however other local authorities had introduced similar schemes that had resulted in increased recycling rates.

The Strategic Lead, Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing said that educating and supporting residents to improve their recycling rates is fundamental to the success of this change. He said that if the proposals are agreed a programme of promotional and educational activity to inform residents will be implemented. He said that canvasser's will visit properties to engage with residents and deliver leaflets that will explain why the changes are being introduced. He said that leaflets will explain the need to change in terms of money to be saved that can be spent on other services. He said that the Council's website will be updated and social media will be used to support this area activity.

The Strategic Lead, Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing said that prior to bins being changed a sticker will be placed on individual bins to explain that the bin will be removed and replaced on the next collection date and that the news bins will be identifiable to the household. He said that household ownership of a bin is recognised nationally as an important factor to encourage responsible use of bins. In response to a members question he said that the bins that are removed will be recycled.

Members commented that residents needed to be encouraged and supported to increase the levels of food waste that they recycle, stating that this was key to the

success of this proposed change. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods agreed and said that residents will be supported to increase their food recycling rates. He said that caddy liners are available across the city in libraries and other sites in local communities.

A member said that she was concerned that a reduction in bin size could result in an increase in fly tipping. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said that if a household consists of 6 or more people or they generate additional waste due to a medical reason, and they are recycling to full capacity the household will qualify for additional capacity. He further said that fly tipping is usually items that would never go in a black bin, such as sofas and fridges. He said that perpetrators of fly tipping will be tackled through enforcement action. He said that the Council still provides a free bulky waste collection service for residents and there are a number of household waste and recycling sites across the city for residents to dispose of larger items in a responsible way.

The Strategic Lead, Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing said that Biffa will be responsible for removing any side waste left by bins. He said this will be closely monitored and tracked. He said that incidents of this will be reported and if necessary teams will contact those residents concerned with a view to supporting them to recycle more. He said that the worst offenders who repeatedly fly tip or discarded waste irresponsibly will be tackled by the fly tipping team who will work with the Neighbourhood Teams to tackle the worst offenders and use enforcement powers.

Members then discussed the use of clothes banks to reduce the levels of textile waste being sent to landfill. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said that there are examples of where this had proven to be very successful, both in terms of increasing recycling rates and raising funds for charities. He said that he is mindful that this has to be developed at a ward level.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods further described examples of initiatives that had been implemented to increase recycling at specific times that had previously seen increased levels of fly tipping. An example of this was at the end of the academic term in student areas. He described that the British Heart Foundation had worked in those areas at this specific time to take unwanted or abandoned furniture which helped the charity and reduced the levels of bulky items being dumped in alleyways. He said that these and similar targeted initiatives are to be supported for the benefit of neighbourhoods.

The Chair said he welcomed the report and welcomed the acknowledgement within the report given to the work undertaken by the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group. He said that the low level of recycling in apartment blocks remains an issue. He said that more needed to be done to encourage a sense of responsibility amongst managing agents to promote and encourage recycling for their tenants. He said that Planning legislation needed to be used more rigorously to ensure the correct facilities are available to allow residents to recycle. He suggested that a Manchester Standard should be considered for any new apartment developments.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods responded by saying that the introduction of weighing machines on the Biffa trucks will allow for the monitoring of

recycling levels in apartment blocks. He said this data will identify those premises where rates are low and this will allow for targeted interventions to increase rates of recycling.

In response to member's concerns the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said he would respond in writing to the member.

The Chair invited the Committee to endorse the report and the recommendations to the Executive. The majority of the Committee endorsed the recommendations.

Decision

1. The Committee requested that a Quarterly Performance Dashboard report is submitted to the Committee for information. This report will contain performance data on the Biffa contract and the activity of the City's Strategic Waste Team. The first report is to be submitted to the October meeting of the Committee.

2. The Committee requested that a substantive update report is submitted to the Committee for consideration at an appropriate time. The Committee requested that a representative from Biffa be invited to attend this meeting.

3. The majority of the Committee support the recommendation that the Executive approve:

- the introduction of a 140 litre wheeled bin for residual waste to be collected on a fortnightly basis from August 2016.
- the phased introduction from February 2017 of a reduction of residual waste capacity for apartment blocks to meet the recycling levels expected from 4 bin households.
- that residents in terraced housing with container collections can revert to wheeled bin collections should they demonstrate that they will collectively present and remove recycling bins on collection days.
- the removal of Bring Sites with immediate effect.

And notes:

- the funding arrangements of the GMWDA and the proposed review of the contract and the inter authority agreement for Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority.

NESC/16/08 Overview Report

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which contained key decisions within the Committee's remit and responses to previous recommendations was submitted for comment. Members were also invited to agree the Committee's future work programme.

A member recommended that following the previous discussion that a visit to the Waste and Recycling Centre in Sharston be arranged for members of the Committee.

The members agreed this recommendation.

Decision

1. To note the report.
2. The Committee requested that the Scrutiny Support Officer arrange a visit to the Sharston Household Waste and Recycling Site.