

Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2016

Present:

Councillor Peel – In the Chair

Councillors Shaukat Ali, Chohan, Hughes, Igbon, Kirkpatrick, Leech, Noor, Paul, Rawson, Sadler and Sheikh

Councillor N Murphy, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

Councillor B Priest, Deputy Leader

Councillor Battle, Executive Member for Environment

Councillor Flanagan, Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

Councillor Davies, City Centre Ward Councillor

Ian Christie, Castlefield Forum

Apologies: Councillors Azra Ali, Longsden, Ludford and Marshall

NESC/16/22 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2016 as a correct record.

NESC/16/23 Neighbourhood Planning in Castlefield

The Committee considered the report submitted by the Deputy Chief Executive, Growth and Neighbourhoods which described that in January 2016, the Council received an application to designate a Neighbourhood Area in Castlefield for Neighbourhood Planning purposes.

The Committee was invited to comment upon this application for a designation of a Neighbourhood Area in Castlefield prior to its submission to the Executive.

The Head of Policy, Partnerships and Research introduced the report. He informed the Committee that the Council's overall approach to Neighbourhood Planning is set out in a policy framework approved by the Executive in September and that this report should be considered in that context. He said that the report considered the application for Castlefield within Manchester's policy framework, summarised the consultation responses received and recommended the designation of an alternative area to the one applied for, setting out the reasons behind this recommendation.

The Committee welcomed Ian Christie, Castlefield Forum representative. Mr Christie welcomed the fact that the Council had made amendments to the recommended designated area since the committee last considered the matter in July but still felt that the area proposed omitted important parts of what the Forum considered as Castlefield. Mr Christie then presented the Committee with a plan with a further revised boundary which had previously been sent to the Council, outlining the proposed area for designation that was not included within the published report. Mr

Christie explained the rationale for the submission and challenged the officer's reasons for refusing the application as stated within the written report.

The Committee welcomed Councillor Davies, City Centre Ward Councillor. Councillor Davies said that she supported the amended proposal submitted by the residents of Castlefield. She said that neighbourhoods should reflect the areas in which people live and identify as their neighbourhood. She said that resident's views and aspirations should be listened to and taken into consideration when assessing an application.

A member said that Neighbourhood Planning is limited in what it can achieve for residents and it is not appropriate for those areas where Strategic Regeneration Frameworks are agreed. He said that Neighbourhood Planning raises unrealistic expectations for residents in what they can seek to achieve and influence. He said that more needed to be done to raise awareness amongst residents groups to manage expectations. A member commented that resident forums are more constructive mechanisms for residents to engage with and influence improvements in their neighbourhood.

In response to a question from the Chair the Head of Policy, Partnerships and Research said the application assessed was as formally submitted and received by the Council earlier in the year and as presented within the report and not one based on the area presented by Mr Christie at the meeting. Mr Christie said that the Castlefield Forum would be prepared to submit a new application based on the amended area. The Head of Policy, Partnerships and Research explained that if a new application was submitted for the revised area this would be assessed against the policy framework agreed by the Council in September and the officer recommendation would therefore be the same. He explained that the rationale for excluding the St John's area was based partly on the fact that this area was different in character from the rest of the area proposed for designation and was separated from it by Liverpool Road. Inclusion of the area would also significantly increase the resident population within the area to the extent that it could be problematic for a forum of 21 people to be seen to adequately represent the area.

The Committee acknowledged the work undertaken by the residents of Castlefield to bring forward their application. The Committee recognised that the residents had compromised and amended their application following the July meeting and subsequent discussions with officers. The Committee said they supported the residents and resolved not to endorse the recommendation to Executive.

Decisions

1. The Committee did not endorse the recommendation:

'Executive refuse the area specified in the application and instead designate the area shown on the attached map in Appendix 1 as the Castlefield Neighbourhood Area and agrees that the designated area should not be designated as a business area'.

2. The Committee recommended that the Executive designate the most recent area submitted by the Castlefield Forum as the Castlefield Neighbourhood Area.

3. The Committee welcomed the adopted Neighbourhood Planning Policy Framework.

4. The Committee recommended that Executive undertake activity to raise awareness amongst residents and elected members about Neighbourhood Planning and what can be achieved through this process.

5. The Committee thanked the residents of the Castlefield Forum for the work undertaken in bringing forward this application.

NESC/16/24 Compliance and Enforcement Service – Overview of the role of the service and performance to date

The Committee considered the report submitted by the Deputy Chief Executive, Growth and Neighbourhoods. The report provided members with an overview of the role of the compliance and enforcement service and performance since the services' inception in January 2016. The Strategic Lead Compliance Enforcement and Community Safety introduced the report across its main themes.

Members welcomed the improvements made to the service and reported good relationships with officers thanking them for their hard work within their wards. A member enquired whether there was a direct line for residents to use to report issues. Members were advised that the contact centre (0161 234 5000) was open at the weekend.

A member referred to the case study about dog fouling and welcomed the educational approach used. In response to her query as to whether this could be adopted city-wide the Strategic Lead Compliance Enforcement and Community Safety advised that these types of initiatives were demand led and encouraged members to approach their local neighbourhood managers where particular concerns were identified. She added that the Council's dog wardens operated a facebook page which gave information on community events and initiatives.

Members sought clarity on why certain aspects of compliance and enforcement were not included within the report. A member asked about unlicensed taxis plying for hire; and why this was not included. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods explained that a lot of work was ongoing in partnership with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to tackle this. He noted that crime and disorder came within the remit of the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee, but that he was happy to provide a future update to either Committee as appropriate regarding this. In response to enquiries about planning and building regulations the Strategic Lead Compliance Enforcement and Community Safety advised these areas were not within her remit. The Chair added that a future report on planning and building regulation and enforcement would be added to the Committee's work programme.

Members discussed response times. The Strategic Lead Compliance Enforcement and Community Safety advised that 5 working days was the standard response time for complaints. In response to a members query she responded that all complaints were dealt with fairly and response times were not longer for things neighbourhood

officers were already aware of. A member challenged officers on why programmed inspections were not evenly spread throughout the year. The Strategic Lead Compliance Enforcement and Community Safety explained that programmed inspections were predominantly of food premises and inspection dates were dependent on previous inspection dates and when the establishment opened. She explained that food premises could be subject to re-inspection at six, twelve or eighteen month intervals and assured members that the food team worked closely with other officers in compliance and enforcement. In response to members queries around the process for carrying out food inspections the Chair advised that the Committee would receive a future report on the Food Plan which would explain these issues.

Members requested more information on littering, housing enforcement; including a breakdown of the different notices served; and noisy parties including how many were resolved at what stage. The Strategic Lead Compliance and Enforcement advised she could provide more information on this if required. In respect of noise nuisance she described the work undertaken to respond to this, including preventative action. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods advised that littering would be included within the Environmental Dashboard which was currently being developed and would be provided to a future meeting of the Committee. In response to members' requests to receive information broken down by ward he advised that information for ward co-ordination was currently being developed. He added that reports had been provided to Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee regarding proactive work to prevent anti-social behaviour, in particular in student areas.

Members welcomed the proactive work undertaken within their wards and the additional resource the Council had provided for compliance and enforcement activity. In response to a members query regarding the sharp rise in requests for service around licensing issues the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods confirmed this was due to the additional Council resources to respond to this. A member queried whether the resource given would be enough in the long term given the number of compliance and enforcement issues. The Chair added that consideration needed to be given to the resource for out of hours provision. He noted that the Committee would be discussing the Council's budget at its November meeting and this could be considered then. In response to a query regarding the fair allocation of resource across the city the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods advised that resources were allocated according to demand in that area; for example the city centre may have more food inspections as there were more food premises.

A member asked what happened to the money raised from fines. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods explained that these were not intended to be profit making. Fines from fixed penalty notices were paid to the Council with the level of fine tied to the amount of enforcement carried out however, fines from cases resulting in court action were paid to the government.

Members discussed the Strangeways case study, and particular issues in the area around counterfeit goods. Members stressed the importance of targeting those actually responsible. The Strategic Lead Compliance and Enforcement described

the new approach of working with the Council's corporate property team to take action against those who own the buildings to effect long term change.

Decisions:

1. To thank officers for the report and for their work in neighbourhoods across the city.
2. To request a future report on planning and building regulation and enforcement.
3. To request a future update is provided to Scrutiny on taxi licensing enforcement; following consultation with the Chair of Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee regarding the partnership approach with Greater Manchester Police.
4. To note that the Strategic Lead Compliance and Enforcement would provide further information to members on housing enforcement; including a breakdown of the different notices served; and noisy parties including how many were resolved at what stage.

NESC/16/25 The Council's approach to Budget Setting 2017/18-2019/20

The Committee considered the report of the City Treasure which provided the Committee with an overview of the budget process to date and next steps, including details of the Budget Conversation which closed on 16 September.

The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources informed the Committee that a report will be submitted to the November meeting that will present officers savings proposals. He said that the Committee will be able to comment on these proposals. He encouraged the Committee to involve as many residents and residents groups in the scrutiny process to ensure the views of residents are captured and included in the budget conversation.

In response to a members comment on the consultation process the Deputy Leader said that the process adopted this year is longer than in previous years and the response rate is higher.

In response to a comment from a member the Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources said that he welcomed any support to ensure that Manchester receives a fair deal in the autumn budget statement.

The Chair encouraged members to suggest invited guests to attend the November meeting for the budget discussion.

Decisions

1. The Committee noted the activity, engagement and feedback received as part of the Budget Conversation.
2. The Committee noted the next phase of the process, including the second phase of Budget consultation proposals and next steps.

NESC/16/26 Terms of Reference and draft Work Programme of the Air Quality Task and Finish Group

The Committee considered the report submitted by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which presented the proposed terms of reference and work programme for the Air Quality Task and Finish group. The Committee was invited to agree the terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group; agree the work programme or make any necessary revisions; agree the membership and appoint a Chair.

Decisions

1. The Committee agreed the terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group.
2. The Committee agreed the work programme of the Task and Finish Group.
3. The Committee agreed to appoint Councillor Strong as Chair of the Task and Finish Group.
4. The Committee agreed to appoint Councillors Kirkpatrick, Leech, Noor, Paul, Peel and Sheikh as members of the Task and Finish Group.

NESC/16/27 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 requested that a report on the use of glyphosate for controlling weeds in Manchester be submitted for consideration by the Committee at an appropriate time. The Committee supported this recommendation.

The Chair commented that the November meeting will include the Budget Savings report and recommended that the Cycle City Ambition Grant be moved to the December meeting and that the item on Carbon Literacy Training be included as an Item for Information within the Overview Report.

Decisions

1. To note the report and approve the work programme subject to the above amendments.
2. To include a report on the work programme on the use of glyphosate for controlling weeds in Manchester for consideration at the January meeting.