

## **Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2016**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Peel – In the Chair

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

Councillor N Murphy, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

Councillor B Priest, Deputy Leader

Councillor Andrews, Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing

Councillor Bridges, Assistant Executive Member

Councillor Battle, Executive Member for Environment

Councillor Akbar, Assistant Executive Member

Mark Hodgkinson, Biffa

Wayne Clark, Biffa

#### **Apologies:**

Councillor Appleby, Marshall and Ludford

#### **NESC/16/34            Urgent Business – Rough Sleepers**

The Chair agreed to take an item of urgent business on Rough Sleepers.

#### **NESC/16/35            Minutes**

#### **Decision:**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2016 as a correct record.

#### **NESC/16/36            Rough Sleepers**

The Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing reported that the recent deaths of two rough sleepers in the city centre was both tragic and shocking. Following formal identification from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) he reported that one of the men did hold a tenancy with Northwards Housing and was receiving support from both the Primary Assessment Team and the Barnabus Day Centre. He reported that on 4 November 2016 this man was part of a group of individuals approached by GMP and the Council's Rough Sleepers team and had declined offers of support and assistance. The Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing further reported that the other man had recently been accommodated through the Council's Cold Weather Provision Scheme at Woodward Court; and following this at the Willows Project in Oldham. He was not known to the Rough Sleepers Team but did use the Barnabus Day Centre. The Willows Project had recently helped him to reconnect with his family.

The Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing stressed that there was no need for anyone to sleep rough and he wanted to appeal to anyone who was to contact the Council to access appropriate support and assistance. In response to a

member's query the Strategic Director for Adult Social Care advised that the Council had a Rough Sleepers Team who engaged with rough sleepers on a daily basis to offer advice and assistance. She stressed that the Council could not help people until they were off the streets. She explained that hostels and temporary accommodation were available and that the Council re-housed hundreds of individuals and thousands of families every year. She added that once in temporary accommodation individuals were allocated a key worker who supported them to access a range of services appropriate to them for example drug services, mental health services, and debt advisors. She added that key workers would help support people until they were re-housed into their own accommodation and could manage on their own.

The Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing stressed the importance of the Homelessness Charter which brought together partners across the city to resolve issues of homelessness. He reported that the Council currently housed approximately 653 families and over 700 individuals in temporary accommodation with the aim of helping them to secure a permanent tenancy. He added that he was working closely with the Deputy Leader to tackle this issue. He encouraged the Committee to consider the work currently ongoing.

Members welcomed the work of the Council and its partners to tackle rough sleeping and homelessness and resolved to consider housing issues further at a future meeting.

**Decision:**

To note the oral report

**NESC/16/37            Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Update**

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which set out the impact of service change and future measures to increase recycling as well as discussing the performance of the Waste, Recycling & Street Cleansing contract. The report was requested to provide a progress update on the contract and update members on the progress made on the implementation of the recommendations of the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group. The Director of Neighbourhoods and the Strategic Lead introduced the report across its main themes. Mark Hodgkinson and Wayne Clark from Biffa were also in attendance to answer members queries. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods praised the work of staff and the residents of Manchester for ensuring a smooth transition for replacement of bins to residents.

Members welcomed the factual information contained within the report. Members requested that information such as fly tipping be broken down on a ward basis and provided to ward co-ordination to which the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods agreed. He added that an 'Environmental Dashboard' was still being developed and he hoped to report on this back to Committee early in 2017.

Members discussed communication issues around service change. A member expressed disappointment that not all community groups were made aware that their bins were being replaced. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods explained

that the Council was not aware that some groups had waste requirements but this was now being addressed. In response to a query regarding call volume the Strategic Lead acknowledged that whilst the bins were being replaced a lot of phone calls were received over a short period but advised that this had now stabilised. In respect of jobs showing as closed where they had not been completed he explained that sometimes multiple jobs had been created for the same incident and this was being addressed. The Chair praised the door to door engagement work around service change and asked what the Communications Plan was when introducing contract changes to apartment blocks. The Strategic Lead explained this would have to be tailored to particular locations and developments. He stressed the need for management agents to take responsibility and for the Council to engage effectively with them to ensure a positive response to service change. He reiterated that overwhelmingly residents' response to the service changes had been positive. Members offered to support officers when engaging with residents around service change.

Members discussed the problem of waste that could not be recycled and asked what could be done to influence suppliers to use less packaging or packaging that was recyclable. The Strategic Lead explained that the Council worked closely with a charity known as WRAP to campaign on this issue where it could. In response to a member's suggestions regarding identifying collection points for green bags the Strategic Lead noted that anecdotal evidence suggested that the green bags were being used for other purposes and emphasised that the Council needed to ensure these were distributed appropriately.

Members discussed the problem of rubbish left outside of bins known as side waste and noted that it was a continued issue. The Strategic Lead acknowledged that in some areas recycling rates hadn't increased as much as the Council wanted but he added that overwhelmingly residents were embracing change as indicated by the increased recycling tonnage levels overall. In response to a members query about side waste tonnage the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods explained that it was not recorded as it was removed at the same time as the main bin. In response to members concerns the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods advised that cardboard should be taken at the same time as the blue bin, even if it could not fit inside the bin.

In response to a query around issues of parked cars preventing street cleansing Mark Hodgkinson from Biffa reported that manual barrows were now being used for these areas. In respect of before and after photographs Mark Hodgkinson advised these were only taken where there was an issue to report for example side waste, or issues with broken bins. In response to members queries regarding the timetable for street cleansing the Strategic Lead confirmed that the schedule was for a detailed cleanse every 3 weeks with further street cleansing as and when required.

Members discussed behaviour change. Mark Hodgkinson advised that four canvassers were targeting challenging areas identified by the Neighbourhood Teams and engaging with residents to explain the changes. In response to members queries the Strategic Lead added advised that details of occupancy or ownership could be sought for those households causing a problem; and that where residents refused to engage enforcement action would be taken.

Members discussed additional capacity. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods stressed the need to exercise caution in promoting this as those residents who could manage without the need for additional capacity were encouraged to do so. However, he assured members that all those in receipt of additional capacity prior to the bin size reduction had been contacted to check whether they still required this. He added that whilst the number of households requiring additional capacity had increased following the change as the bin size had reduced the overall tonnage for additional capacity had reduced

A member commented that social landlords should take responsibility for any fly tipping on their estates carried out by their tenants. The Strategic Lead agreed adding that he was engaging with a number of social housing providers at present and sharing information and was pleased that they were addressing this.

The Chair welcomed the action taken in response to the recommendations of the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group, in particular with respect to apartment blocks. He requested that Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing updates be received by Committee on a quarterly basis, the next update to be provided in March 2017.

#### **Decisions:**

1. To note the report
2. To note that relevant data would be provided to Ward Coordination
2. To request quarterly updates to Committee on Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing, with the next update to be in March 2017.

#### **NESC/16/38          Budget**

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) and the City Treasurer. At its November meeting, members considered the budget options for the areas within its remit and further detail was requested to inform the Committee's recommendations on those that they believe should be taken forward to the Executive. The report summarised the budget process and next steps. Subsequent appendices provided details of the savings options put forward by officers and further information regarding a number of budget options for which additional information was requested by Committee in November. The Committee was asked to use the information provided to identify which, if any, of the options put forward fall into either of the following categories: A: Options which should only be considered by the Executive if the overall level of savings required exceeds £40m or B: Options which should only be considered by the Executive if the level of savings required means that all options have to be taken forward, and no alternative savings can be found. The Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) introduced the report. The Chair noted that the Committee did not want to make any cuts to Council services but this was required due to central government reducing the amount of funding it provided to the Council.

Members discussed the savings options for service efficiencies for Compliance and Enforcement, the Neighbourhoods Service and Waste. In respect of the alternative models for delivery of the Animal Welfare Service the Chair noted that Option 3 appeared to provide the best return on investment, to which members agreed. In respect of service efficiencies to the Neighbourhoods Service a member enquired whether these could be reviewed were it found the level of savings was not necessary to which the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) agreed. Members agreed to the savings options for service efficiencies.

A member with several bowling greens in her ward spoke about the service reduction savings option for Grounds Maintenance which involved removing the fine turf team and to stop maintaining 23 bowling greens across the city. She requested that the Council carry out a consultation exercise with the current membership before exploring this option further to which members agreed.

The Committee did not support the proposed service reduction savings options for Compliance and Enforcement which included a reduction in the out of hours team; and a reduction in the number of compliance staff. Members noted that cuts had already been made over recent years to these services and they welcomed the current activities of the teams. The Committee felt that officers should consider alternative options.

The Committee did not support the proposed service reduction savings options for the Neighbourhood Teams which included a 10% reduction in staffing within the Neighbourhood Teams; and a further 20% reduction in staffing within the Neighbourhood Teams. Members noted that cuts had already been made over recent years to these services and they welcomed the current activities of the teams. Members also noted that they did not support the savings options for reductions to the Neighbourhood Investment Fund, though noted this came under the remit of Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee. The Committee felt that officers should consider alternative options to reducing staff in the Neighbourhood Teams.

### **Decisions:**

In respect of the Growth & Neighbourhoods 2017/18 - 2019/20 savings options which fell within the Committee's remit the Committee:

1. Supported the savings options for service efficiencies for Compliance and Enforcement, the Neighbourhoods Service and Waste.
2. In respect of the options for alternative models for delivery of the Animal Welfare Service the Committee recommended that 'Option 3 Retain and make efficiencies in the in house service' was their preferred solution.
3. In respect of the service reduction savings option for Grounds Maintenance removal of the fine turf team and to stop maintaining 23 bowling greens across the city the Committee requested that the Council carry out a consultation exercise with those affected or potentially affected by the service reduction.
4. The Committee did not support the proposed service reduction savings options for Compliance and Enforcement which included a reduction in the out of hours team; and a reduction in the number of compliance staff. The Committee felt that officers should consider alternative options.

5. The Committee did not support the proposed service reduction savings options for the Neighbourhood Teams which included a 10% reduction in staffing within the Neighbourhood Teams; and a further 20% reduction in staffing within the Neighbourhood Teams. The Committee felt that officers should consider alternative options.

### **NESC/16/39            Selective Licensing**

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which provided a progress update on the implementation of the pilot Landlord Selective Licensing (SL) scheme approved at Executive on 29 June 2016. In addition the report provided detailed feedback on the extensive consultation exercise completed in an area within Crumpsall to establish whether the declaration of a SL scheme is required. The Director of Housing introduced the report.

Members welcomed the plans to introduce selective licensing and its use to improve the quality of private rented accommodation and protect tenants. The Chair asked whether there were plans to extend the scheme to other areas within the city. The Director of Housing said that Executive had agreed that the pilot would commence in the specified areas and a full evaluation would be carried out before consideration was given to implementing the scheme elsewhere.

A member noted that he was aware of a recent consultation by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in respect of Mandatory Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing and asked what steps the Director of Housing had taken to scope the impact of a potential expansion of the scheme. The Director of Housing advised that this hadn't been scoped in relation to the Selective Licensing Pilot as this had specific requirements in legislation but that consideration would be given to the responses to the consultation and its potential impact.

The Chair noted he was aware there had been some ICT issues. The Director of Housing confirmed these related purely to the online application but that a manual system would be used until this was resolved; and timetables adjusted accordingly. The Chair added that he was aware that a three month formal notification period was required before the pilot could commence, which the Director confirmed would commence the following week.

#### **Decision:**

To welcome the introduction of the Selective Licensing Pilot; and to note that three months formal notification of its introduction was required which would commence on Monday 12 December 2016.

### **NESC/16/40            Delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy**

The Committee received a report entitled Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy which provided an overview of work undertaken and progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the Our Manchester Strategy for those areas within the portfolio of the Executive Member for Environment and the Executive

Member for Neighbourhoods. Members noted the reports were self explanatory and had no further questions

**Decision:**

To note the report

**NESC/16/40            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.

The Chair noted that Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee at its meeting had proposed the establishment of a Joint Task and Finish Group with Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee regarding Road Safety around Schools and enquired whether any members were interested in joining it. Councillors Rawson, Igbon, Kirkpatrick and Noor expressed interest.

Members agreed to dedicate its February meeting to Housing and Homelessness issues and to invite Shelter and the Young People's Support Foundation to deliver presentations to the Committee on their work.

Councillor Paul noted that there had been some developments regarding the Air Quality Task and Finish Group. He advised that Councillor Strong was no longer able to Chair the Group but that he was able to Chair this instead, to which members agreed. He added that instead of 3 short meetings it was likely there would instead be one or two longer meetings and these would not take place until February 2017 due to availability of invited guests. The Terms of Reference and Work Programme for the Group would be updated and re-submitted to Committee.

**Decisions:**

1. To note the report and approve the work programme subject to the above additions
2. To note that Councillors Rawson, Igbon, Kirkpatrick and Noor expressed interest in joining the Joint Road Safety around Schools Task and Finish Group
3. To note that updated Terms of Reference and Work Programme would be re-submitted for the Air Quality Task and Finish Group.