

Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2017

Present:

Councillor Peel – In the Chair

Councillors Appleby, Azra Ali, Igbon, Kirkpatrick, Leech, Noor, Paul, Rawson and Sadler

Councillor N Murphy, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

Councillor Battle, Executive Member for Environment

Councillor Akbar, Ward Councillor for Rusholme

Councillor Shilton Godwin, Lead Member for Active Travel

Alex Sporidou, Centrepont

John Ryan, Shelter

Paul Pandolfo, Inspiring Change Manchester

Apologies:

Councillors Chohan, Hughes and Marshall

NESC/17/12 Gerald Kaufman MP

The Committee and all those present observed a period of silence in remembrance for Gerald Kaufman MP who had recently passed away.

NESC/17/13 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2017 as a correct record.

NESC/17/14 Shelter and Young People's Support Foundation – Presentation and Discussion Item

The Committee welcomed Alex Sporidou from Centrepont; John Ryan from Shelter and Paul Pandolfo from Inspiring Change Manchester who had attended the meeting to inform the members of their work across the city.

Mr Ryan said that the funding provided by the City Council is important as it enables Shelter to secure other sources of revenue. He then described the services provided by Shelter, which ranged from general advice and information to specialist legal advice and intensive long-term support. He said that they had experienced an increase in the incidents of homelessness, street homeless and also the 'hidden homeless'. He said that welfare reform and the introduction of the benefit cap has had a significant impact on people.

Mr Ryan said that Shelter campaign for improvements in the Private Rented Sector. He said that to make this sector of the housing market more secure for tenants they advocate Private Landlords granting a five year tenancy. He said that the impact on families who have to move periodically due to tenancies ending can be very disruptive. He also said they work with private landlords to improve their management practices.

Mr Pandolfo said that Inspiring Change is an eight year programme with the aim to assist people with multiple needs to break the cycle of homelessness. He said that a Housing First scheme had been piloted to support people obtain a tenancy and then support them to address their problems and support them to successfully maintain a tenancy. He said that key to the success of this programme had been the use of a peer mentoring scheme to develop a person centred support package and address social isolation.

Mr Pandolfo said that the inclusion of people with experience of homelessness in the co-design and delivery of services is very important. He said this will improve services and empower people who are marginalised. He said that cross sector planning at a national level should also be encouraged to address the issue of homelessness.

Ms Sporidou informed the Committee of the work of Centrepoin, a young person focused homeless charity. She explained they had premises in the City Centre and in the south of the city for young people aged between 16 – 25 years who present for assistance. She said they offer young people advice and guidance, preparatory tenancy training and support for people once they had secured a tenancy. She said they also offer an employment options advice services. She said that the main reasons why people present as homeless are relationship breakdown, substance misuse, mental health issues and individuals leaving institutions.

In response to a question from the Chair Ms Sporidou said that a Family and Young Person test should be applied to any national policy reform and that locally more housing and support should be available for young people with complex needs. In addition to this there should also exist good quality career options for young people.

Ms Sporidou informed the Committee that they had witnessed an increase in the use of psychoactive substances amongst young people over recent years and the detrimental effect this was having on people. The Chair recommended that the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee consider the prevalence of psychoactive substances in the city and the response by agencies to this issue. The Committee supported this recommendation.

The Director of Adult Social Services thanked all services across the city for their commitment and continued hard work despite the significant challenges experienced.

The Director of Adult Social Services said that the Big Change Campaign had been very successful and had to date raised £55000. She said this alternative giving scheme, managed by the Voluntary and Community Sector had made a positive contribution to improving the lives of homeless people across the city and advocated that the campaign continues.

The Director of Adult Social Services informed the Committee that additional funding had been secured to tackle homelessness. She said that the service models that are currently in the design stage include prevention work, Emergency Access Hubs and wrap around services. She said that Supported Accommodation schemes are being reconfigured to ensure that they reflect the needs of people accessing this service. She said that it is recognised that 'move on' and supported accommodation services also benefit from peer support and mentoring services.

The invited guests all said that they were members of the Homelessness Charter and campaign nationally to raise awareness of the issue of homelessness. Guests all confirmed that services and organisations established across the city are now working together to coordinate an effective response to the issue of homelessness.

A member commented on the difficulty in accommodating couples who present as homeless. The Director of Adult Social Services acknowledged this can be a challenge. She said that Woodward Court provided accommodation for homeless couples, however wider consideration needed to be given to this issue. In addition she said that consideration needed to be given to housing people with pets.

A member welcomed the partnership approach as described during the discussion and commented that schools should be encouraged to provide information and sign posting to prevent young people becoming homeless. She further commented that housing providers should be encouraged to do more for their tenants when they are notified of rent arrears. The Director of Adult Social Services responded by informing the Committee that Registered Housing providers are members of the Homeless Charter group.

Decisions

1. To thank all invited guests for attending the meeting and contributing to the discussion.
2. To request that the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee consider the prevalence of psychoactive substances in the city and the response by agencies to this issue.

NESC/17/15 Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Growth and Neighbourhoods which summarised comments made during the consultation on the Draft Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document, which recommended a Council response and as a result proposed amendments. The report also recommended that Executive should agree to the adoption of the amended Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document which would be used when considering future applications for planning permission for new Hot Food Takeaway premises. Members were invited to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Executive on 8 March 2017.

The Committee welcomed Cllr Battle, Executive Member for the Environment who introduced the report. She informed the Committee that following the consultation exercise the Executive is now being asked to agree a 10% concentration threshold as opposed to the original suggestion of 5% to be adopted. She said that considering the current spread of hot food takeaways across the City's district centres, it is considered that 10% is a threshold that is more likely to be supported through planning appeals.

A member enquired how many recent planning applications would have been refused if the policy had been applied. The Head of Policy, Partnerships and Research stated that he would look into this and respond to the member. A member further commented that if a retail unit in a centre had remained vacant and an applicant can demonstrate that they cannot let it to operate as any other type of business, discretion can be applied to grant an application for a hot food takeaway. The Head of Policy, Partnerships and Research confirmed that the proposed policy would potentially allow a new hot food takeaway use in such circumstances; any such application would be assessed in terms of the overall impact of the use on amenity and the vitality and viability of the centre concerned.

A member commented that she welcomed the ambition to limit the opening times of takeaways near to school premises and asked if this was to be extended to include premises close to colleges. The Executive Member for the Environment said that this would be difficult to implement due to the different times of the day that students attend college, however she said that work is underway with colleges to raise awareness of healthier food choices.

A member commented that often takeaways keep their shutters closed during the day when they are not trading. The Head of Policy Partnerships and Research clarified that the policy would apply only to premises granted permission in the future and not apply retrospectively. Conditions would be attached to future permissions requiring shutters to be up during the day. The Executive Member said that local members should engage with local traders of existing premises and attempt to persuade them to keep them open.

The Chair commented that the document does not cover the city centre and yet there are some real problems there in particular neighbourhoods where takeaways are clustered. He urged officers to look into how we can address the issues with takeaways in the city centre whilst also supporting the night-time economy.

The Committee noted that the District Centres Subgroup, at their meeting of 23 February 2017 had held a discussion on the Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document and agreed their support for the adoption of this document.

Decision

The Committee noted the report and supported the recommendation that the Executive adopt the Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document attached at Appendix C.

NESC/17/16 Cycle City Ambition Grant

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Growth and Neighbourhoods and the Interim Director of Highways that provided an update on the delivery of cycling infrastructure and the schools programme funded through the first and second phases of the Government funded Cycle City Ambition Grant (CCAG).

The report informed the Committee that the schemes funded through CCAG phase 1 are now largely complete and results from initial monitoring and evaluation work are now available. The findings from this work suggested that the infrastructure had led to increased levels of cycling where improvements have been introduced. CCAG phase 2 schemes are currently in the early development stages and lessons learnt from phase 1 schemes will be incorporated into future scheme design and construction.

Beyond these schemes, the Transport 2040 Strategy, developed by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and the district councils, aims to establish cycling as a recognised and attractive component of our future integrated transport offer with an aspiration for 10% of all trips to be made by bike. The Head of Policy Partnerships and Research introduced the report.

The Committee welcomed the report. A member commented that the funding that has been committed to improving cycling in London is significantly more per head than has been allocated to Manchester. The Executive Member for the Environment acknowledged that this is the case however it is envisaged that a newly appointed Greater Manchester Mayor would champion this agenda and attract additional resources for the region. She stated this is an important area of work for the region to achieve the stated commitment to become a carbon neutral city, addressing poor air quality and the associated health implications for residents of the city.

A member questioned whether usage on the Didsbury section of the route was as high as the report indicated. Officers clarified that the figures quoted were averages for the route as a whole and that usage was higher on the more northern sections of the route, closer to the Universities.

The Committee welcomed Councillor Shilton Godwin, Lead Member for Active Travel. She said she supported the comments made by the Executive Member stating that addressing the issues of poor air quality and traffic congestion will deliver benefits for a growing city and provide a positive legacy for future generations.

A member commented that there appeared to be a north/south divide within the city with regard to cycle lane improvements. This was acknowledged by officers in relation to the schemes implemented to date and currently scheduled. The report committed to giving consideration to potential schemes in the north of the city during the roll out of future improvements.

Members welcomed the additional document that had been provided that supplied details of the evaluation of the Wilmslow Road scheme. The Committee welcomed the stated commitment to ongoing evaluation to inform further improvements and recommended that regular evaluation reports are provided to the Committee when

they are available.

A member asked about the ongoing maintenance cost for the cycle lanes. The Citywide Highways Manager replied saying that maintenance costs had been considered as part of the initial design process and this is monitored and any improvements will be implemented in future designs.

In response to a member's comment regarding the level of consultation undertaken the Citywide Highways Manager said that the consultation had been extensive along the Wilmslow Road cycle route. He said it had been divided into five distinct areas along the route with a number of drop in sessions arranged at different locations. He said that in addition to the publicity available on the Council's website this had also attracted publicity in the local press that then directed readers to the consultation documents. A member commented that he was confident that the consultation exercise had been extensive and the results of this had informed the final design. He stated that the Wilmslow Road route is a positive example of what can be achieved on a major route into the city and that he hoped this can be replicated across the city.

Members then discussed the different cycle route designs and their appropriateness. A member commented that more use of the existing pathways should be considered, with appropriate separation from pedestrians rather than using the highways. A member commented that most people prefer the segregated highway option.

Decision

To note the report.

NESC/17/17 Petition: Save Our Bins

The Committee considered the report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit that provided details of a petition against Manchester City Council's introduction of smaller 140 litre general waste bins at the end of last year.

The report also described the procedure for the Committee to debate this petition in accordance with the Council's Petitions Scheme.

The Committee welcomed Mr Choudhry, Secretary of the Rusholme Community Traders Association. Mr Choudhry addressed the Committee and stated the reasons for submitting the petition as described at appendix 1 of the report.

The Strategic Lead, Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing was then invited to respond to the issues raised. He informed the Committee that the change in bins will help contribute to the financial savings required; whilst recognizing the concerns of residents there had been no significant increase in fly tipping tonnage following the change; enforcement activity is being targeted to tackle problematic areas and a consultation exercise had been undertaken in 2016 that attracted approximately 1300 responses.

The Strategic Lead, Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing informed the Committee of the criteria to qualify for extra capacity bins. These are households with six or more residents; households with two or more children in nappies; households with medical conditions that result in more waste and any other exceptional circumstances.

In response to comments regarding the reading of tags in bins to monitor residents recycling behaviour the Strategic Lead, Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing reassured the Committee that these are not being used to spy on residents and that currently these cannot be read as the Council does not have the necessary equipment to enable them to do so.

The Strategic Lead, Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing then addressed the issue of waste generated by supermarket packaging. He said that more needed to be done at a national level and that the Council are working with WRAP, a national organisation that works with businesses and communities to address this issue. He said that work continues in partnership with residents groups and neighbourhoods to help support them increase rates of recycling.

The Committee welcomed Councillor Akbar, member for the Rusholme ward. He thanked the Rusholme Community Traders Association for working with the community to improve recycling rates in the local neighbourhood.

A member commented that he believed that the change in black bins had not been the best use of resources and more needed to be done to improve the rates of recycling in apartment blocks. He further suggested that the shape of the new bin is too narrow. The member also said that further flexibility needed to be given to those households requesting additional bin capacity.

The Chair informed the Committee that an update report on Waste and Recycling is scheduled to be submitted for consideration at the first meeting of the new municipal year. The Committee recommended that the report provides an update on the issues raised during the discussion of this item.

Decision

To note the petition, and recommend that no action is taken.

NESC/17/18 Terms of Reference and Work Programme for Road Safety Around Schools Task and Finish Group

The Committee considered the report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit that described the proposed terms of reference and work programme for the Road Safety Around Schools Task and Finish Group.

Decisions

1. The Committee agreed the membership of the Task and Finish Group.
2. The Committee agreed the terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group.

3. The Committee agreed the work programme of the Task and Finish Group, which will be reviewed by the group at each of its meetings.

NESC/17/19 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.

Decision

To note the report and approve the work programme.