

## **Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2017**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Paul – In the Chair  
Akbar, Azra Ali, Shaukat Ali, Appleby, Chohan, Green, Hughes, Igbon, Kirkpatrick, Leech, Longsdon, Noor and Sadler

#### **Apologies:**

Councillors Ludford and Rawson

Councillor Priest, Deputy Leader  
Councillor N Murphy, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods  
Councillor Stogia, Executive Member for the Environment  
Councillor Battle, Executive Member for Schools

#### **NESC/17/20            Appointment of Chair**

Councillor Paul was nominated to Chair the meeting. This was seconded and approved.

#### **Decision**

To appoint Councillor Paul to Chair the meeting.

#### **NESC/17/21            Minutes silence for the victims and families of the Grenfell Tower fire**

The Committee and all those present observed a minute's silence for the victims and families of the recent Grenfell Tower fire.

#### **NESC/17/22            Urgent Business – Grenfell Tower**

The Chair introduced an item of urgent business to the meeting by informing the Committee that following the recent tragedy at Grenfell Tower, he had invited the Deputy Leader and the Director of Housing and Residential Growth to address the Committee on how Manchester was responding to the concerns of residents living in tower blocks across Manchester.

The Deputy Leader circulated a statement that read;

*Grenfell Tower fire - Manchester's response*

*Following last week's tragic event in London, the Council and its Housing partners have been working hard to provide information and assurance to all our residents who are living in high rise tower blocks (buildings over 6 storey's) We understand that*

*this is a deeply worrying time for all concerned and we are committed to doing everything we can to provide good advice and support.*

*Today, Joanne Roney, Manchester's Chief Executive and the Deputy Leader met with senior officers from all our housing providers. This was followed by a meeting called by the Mayor with the Chief Fire Officer of Greater Manchester to agree the best way forward in terms of giving assurances and planning urgently what actions we should do as Landlords and jointly with the Fire and Rescue services.*

*What is clear, is that the picture is complicated with many of our tower blocks being built and altered at different times. Up until now the general advice has been for residents to stay in their flats unless they are directly affected by the fire or smoke, when they should leave and get out of the building. It is important to note that in the last 3 years, GM Fire and Rescue Services have dealt with 330 fires in apartments and flats in Greater Manchester and in all instances the fires have been contained within the apartment/flat and the advice to stay put has been effective.*

*Following the incident at Grenfell it is clear that in some instances this advice will need to be reviewed. Every social landlord will now be urgently reviewing and re-stating their fire safety advice for your block in the next few days, taking fire service advice where there is doubt. Following this, a fully comprehensive review of all tower blocks will be carried out jointly with the fire service, prioritising those blocks where we think the risk may be highest. Information gathered over the last few days will be used to guide our actions.*

*Many of our residents living in the City will be living in privately owned tower blocks. The City Council wants to ensure that private landlords and their agents afford the same duty of care to the residents of their high rise buildings. The Chief Fire Officer ultimately has the responsibility of enforcing fire safety standards but initially it is the responsibility of the landlord to complete a Fire Risk Assessment. We are urging all landlords to confirm with their tenants that such an assessment is in place and where there are any doubts, they should contact the Fire Officer to seek advice - tel number 0800 555815.*

*The meeting also agreed to consider what changes we should press Government to implement as part of the public enquiry announced by the Prime Minister. The City Council has already made representations to return all responsibility for Building Control inspections to Council's.*

Members welcomed the swift and comprehensive response as described. Members commented that it was important that all residents were reassured that their homes were safe. A Member said that safety advice and information provided by Social and Private Landlords needed to be delivered in a way so that all residents were able to understand the advice, including the use of translators where required.

The Deputy Leader said that guidance explaining what to do in the event of a fire within each individual block was to be issued within days and that a communications strategy was emerging via the Mayor's office. A member commented that this was important stating that in the context of wider recent tragic events it was important that residents were reassured and felt safe.

Members asked if the external cladding used to refurbish blocks in Manchester was the same material as had been used at Grenfell Tower. The Deputy Leader advised that whilst it didn't appear to be the same, to ensure it was safe, testing of these materials was underway at the Building Research Establishment. He said that if it was found to be the same material, Social Landlords had given a commitment to removing and replacing it with a safer material. He said that private landlords presented a challenge, however the Fire Authority could intervene when required. He said that if Councillors had specific concerns about properties they should alert him and these could be referred to the Fire Authority. He said that this programme of work would be costly and he would be asking the government to meet these costs, in addition he would be asking for Building Control to be administered by the Local Authority, rather than private companies as this would provide additional assurance that buildings were safe for those residents occupying them.

A Member asked if the installation of sprinkler systems were are to be retrofitted. The Deputy Leader said he didn't wish to pre-empt the outcome of any assessments and said that the advice and guidance would be taken from all specialists and professionals, and acted upon. He advised that the programme of prioritising the inspections of tower blocks would be determined by the Fire Service and Housing experts and this would include an assessment of the vulnerability of the residents.

A Member asked if Planning conditions could be used to strengthen fire safety precautions. The Deputy Leader advised that new builds included fire safety precautions and the issue tended to be with older properties.

In response to a member's comment regarding larger student accommodation the Director of Housing and Residential Growth said that Houses of Multiple Occupation were licensed and these included fire safety conditions such as the installation of integrated smoke alarms and fire doors. He said that these properties were subject to routine inspections. The Deputy Leader confirmed that the Universities in Manchester were involved with the Greater Manchester Task Group led by the Greater Manchester Mayor.

The Committee thanked the Deputy Leader and the Director of Housing and Residential Growth for addressing the Committee and commended the swift response in light of the tragedy in London.

The Chair further thanked and praised the very effective and hugely committed response by the people of Manchester, by officers, by elected members and by emergency services and partners to the Arena attack of 22 May.

## **NESC/17/23            Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2017 were submitted for approval. Cllr Shaukat Ali requested that his apologies be recorded in the minute.

### **Decisions**

1. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2017 as a correct

record subject to the above amendment.

2. To note the minutes of the Air Quality Task and Finish Group meetings held on 17, 22 and 24 February 2017.

## **NESC/17/24            Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy**

The Committee considered the reports that 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 Neighbourhoods and the Executive Member for the Environment.

The Committee welcomed Cllr N. Murphy, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods who introduced his report. Members welcomed his report and commented that they had seen improvements with street cleaning within their respective wards. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods welcomed these comments and said that for those streets where there was persistent fly tipping, enforcement action would be taken to identify and prosecute offenders.

A Member asked for further information and, if possible, photographic examples of the national assessment criteria for street cleaning performance that was reported as improving from 30% to 70%. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said this would be provided to Members.

Members then discussed recycling rates within flats. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said that new planning applications included conditions to enable residents to recycle, however the challenge remained with older properties. He said that work continued to help residents with their recycling. A Members asked if recycling rate data could be provided by ward, the Executive Member replied that this would be shared with Members.

In response to comments from Members regarding the effectiveness of the 101 service when reporting crime and ASB, the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods acknowledged the concerns raised and stated that he is working with GMP to help address these issues. The Chair commented that the Crime and Community Safety work of the Executive Members portfolio was reported to the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee then welcomed Cllr Stogia, Executive Member for the Environment and Cllr Battle, Executive Member for Schools and former Executive Member for the Environment. Cllr Stogia introduced her report.

Members welcomed the reported significant investment in Highways. A Member commented that he had experience of the road works in his professional capacity as a driver and he commented that the works had been undertaken in a way so as to minimise the disruption to road users. The Executive Member for the Environment said that roads were surveyed every six months and this then determined which roads were to be prioritised. In response to a comment from a Member she further

stated that when works were to be undertaken neighbourhoods and Ward Members that were to be affected would be informed.

In reply to a question from a Member, the Executive Member for the Environment informed the Committee that currently the Council owns two gulley cleaning machines and have another one on contract. The Executive Member said that gully cleaning was determined via intelligence gathering and took into account issues such as flood risk areas. The Executive Member further stated that the Pothole and Drainage review described within her report was expected to commence soon and this will be discussed with members via ward coordination meetings.

Members then discussed resident parking schemes. Cllr Battle, Executive Member for Schools said that consideration needed to be given to the costs involved to both the Council and residents in establishing such schemes. The Executive Member said that there were both capital and revenue costs and that alternatives methods, such as electronic permits needed to be considered. She said that good practice adopted by other authorities needed to be explored and evaluated to minimise the cost to residents. The Executive Member said that where possible Section 106 funding, money that was paid by developers to local planning authorities in order to offset the costs of the external effects of development should be used to support such schemes. In response to a Member's comment regarding issues associated with parking around schools, the Executive Member said that a Task and Finish Group had been established to examine this issue and their final recommendations would be presented to the Committee upon conclusion of their investigation.

The Chair of the Committee thanked the Executive Members for attending the meeting. He said that the Committee would receive reports over the year that provided further information on the areas discussed and these will be scheduled into the Committee's Work Programme to be considered at an appropriate time.

### **Decisions**

1. The Committee noted the reports.
2. The Committee agree that they will receive reports that provide further information on the areas discussed. These reports will be scheduled into the Committee's Work Programme to be considered at an appropriate time.

[Councillor Appleby declared a personal interest as an employee of the Manchester College]

### **NESC/17/25                      Road Safety Around Schools Task and Finish Group – Terms of Reference and Work Programme**

The Committee considered the report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit and Members were invited to to re-establish the Road Safety Around Schools Task and Finish Group for the Municipal Year 2017-18; agree the Terms of Reference; the Work Programme and the membership.

## **Decision**

1. The Committee agrees the membership of the Task and Finish Group as Councillors Azra Ali, Sameem Ali, Alijah, Collins, Hughes, Igbon, Kirkpatrick, Leech, Lovecy, Madeleine Monaghan, Noor, Rawson, Reid (Chair) and Stone
2. The Committee agrees the terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group.
3. The Committee agrees the work programme of the Task and Finish Group, which will be reviewed by the Group at each of its meetings.

### **NESC/17/26            Air Quality Task and Finish Group – Terms of Reference and Work Programme**

The Committee considered the report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit and Members were invited to to re-establish the Air Quality Task and Finish Group for the Municipal Year 2017-18; agree the Terms of Reference; the Work Programme and the membership.

## **Decision**

1. The Committee agrees the membership of the Task and Finish Group as Davies, Fletcher-Hackwood, Kirkpatrick, Leech, Noor, Paul (Chair), Peel, Sharif Mahamed, Sheikh, Strong, Watson
2. The Committee agrees the terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group.
3. The Committee agrees the work programme of the Task and Finish Group, which will be reviewed by the Group at each of its meetings.

### **NESC/17/27            Selective Licensing Update including outcome of public consultation for Moss Side and Rusholme**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Housing and Residential Growth. The Committee had received an update on the implementation of the pilot Landlord Selective Licensing (SL) scheme in Crumpsall the first of four chosen neighbourhoods in Manchester at their December 2016 meeting. The report provided an update on progress against the remaining three areas with detailed feedback on the extensive consultation exercise completed in an area within Rusholme and Moss Side. The report advised that a further area in East Manchester was currently under review and this was referenced for information prior to a report being submitted to the Executive later this year. The Director of Housing and Residential Growth introduced the report.

In response to Member's question regarding levels of enforcement activity as a result of landlords failing to apply for a license the Director of Housing and Residential Growth said that there was an agreed non-compliance procedure to address those landlords who evaded applying. He said that enforcement notices had been served

on a number of landlords during property inspections when officers had identified disrepair and safety concerns. He informed the Committee that future update reports would provide information detailing the percentages of non-compliance and the actions taken to address this.

The Director of Housing and Residential Growth informed the Committee that the issues reported regarding IT systems had been resolved and that he was confident that the system was reliable and able to capture the required information to allow the efficient processing of applications.

### **Decision**

To note the report and request that an update report be provided for consideration at an appropriate time.

### **NESC/17/28            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.