

## **Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2018**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Paul – in the Chair

Councillors Azra Ali, Shaukat Ali, Appleby, Chohan, Hughes, Igbon, Kirkpatrick, Leech, Noor, Rawson and Sadler

Councillor N Murphy, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

Councillor Stogia, Executive Member for the Environment

Councillor Flanagan, Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

Councillor Priest, Deputy Leader

Councillor Reid, Ward Member for Gorton South

Helen Smith, Head of Logistics, Environment and Active Travel, Transport for Greater Manchester

**Apologies:** Councillor Longsdon

#### **NESC/18/08            Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2018 as a correct record.

#### **NESC/18/09            Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan Update**

The Committee considered the progress report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Growth and Neighbourhoods that provided information on those activities to reduce direct carbon emissions by 41% by 2020 from a 2009/10 baseline.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:-

- Information regarding the calculation of emissions from the operational building estate;
- An update on the installation of a heat network in the Civic Quarter connecting the Town Hall, Town Hall Extension, Central Library, Heron House; 1 St Peters Square, Manchester Central, the Bridgewater Hall and Manchester Art Gallery that would reduce total emissions by 2,238 tonnes (3.1% of the 2009/10 baseline);
- An update on the programme to replace all of the Manchester street lights with LEDs which would reduce total carbon emissions by 8,400 tonnes (11.7% of the 2009/10 baseline);
- An update on Carbon Literacy Training; and
- Information on the Mayor of Greater Manchester's Green Summit to be held 21 March 2018.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:-

- How many Members had received the Carbon Literacy Training and could this training be delivered to residents;
- How success was measured and had alternative calculations and reporting been considered;
- Further information was requested regarding the impact the rationalised estate has had on carbon emissions;
- Was there any scope for additional lighting columns to be installed as part of the LED replacement programme; and
- Further information was sought on the Green Summit.

The Policy and Partnerships Manager said there was a commitment to calculating carbon emissions to track progress against the target and these were then made publicly available. He said consideration would be given to reporting the carbon budget and recording carbon use in different ways as suggested by Members. He confirmed that the Annual Report contained an analysis of the Council's carbon emissions per staff member. He said that to date 33 Councillors had been fully Carbon Literacy trained, however due to the nature of the training there were a number of Councillors who were currently partially trained. He said that Manchester A Certain Future undertook engagement and training with local communities through a range of neighbourhood based activities. He said there were challenges regarding the time required to formally undertake the Carbon Literacy training however this was being looked into to be able to offer this more widely and efficiently. He said the impact of this training would be assessed and commented that impact on behavioural change could be difficult to capture for the purposes of recording data.

The Policy and Partnerships Manager informed the Committee that further information regarding the Greater Manchester Mayor's Green Summit on 21st March 2018 would be circulated to Members. He said that he would respond to the enquiry regarding the additional lighting columns as part of the LED replacement programme after making enquiries with the relevant department.

The Executive Member for the Environment said that whilst there was an expectation to be robust in how emissions were calculated there were limitations on what the team could and could not do due to staffing resources. She said that work was undertaken with a range of partners, including housing providers to deliver carbon literacy training and awareness at a neighbourhood level. She said that conversations were ongoing to review how best to deliver the carbon literacy training to ensure that it was accessible to all staff, and she encouraged all Members, even those who had previously completed the training, to attend any future training.

## **Decisions**

The Committee

1. note the report;
2. request that future reports include measurable outcomes calculated on staffing levels and the use of the building estate; and

3. welcomes the roll out of Carbon Literacy training, using the Our Manchester approach and requests that the outcomes of this training are reported in future update reports.

**NESC/18/10                      Submission of Greater Manchester's Air Quality Strategic Outline Case to Government and Development of Greater Manchester Mayor's Congestion Plan**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Highways, Transportation and Engineering and the Deputy Chief Executive, People, Policy and Reform.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:-

- An update on the work that had been undertaken to prepare a Draft Clean Air Plan (Strategic Outline Case (SOC)) for submission to Government;
- This document had identified a shortlist of proposed actions, for further investigation, that would enable the Council and other Greater Manchester authorities to meet statutory obligations with respect to Nitrogen Dioxide concentrations in the shortest possible time; and
- An update on the development of a Congestion Plan for Greater Manchester. This Plan was intended to identify a number of near term measures that could better manage congestion across Greater Manchester.

The Committee had been invited to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Executive on 7 February 2018.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:-

- Concern was raised regarding the significant levels of air pollution that had been measured outside of schools that were above the legal limit;
- The need for an equitable public transport network across the city;
- Concern was raised regarding the levels of emissions from buses, particularly older vehicles in the fleet;
- The use of planning conditions to address air pollution;

Councillor Reid, Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee informed the Committee of the work that had been undertaken by the Road Safety Around Schools Task and Finish Group. She said that one aspect of their investigation had been to look at traffic calming measures that would contribute to lowering harmful car emissions. She said that more needed to be done to improve cycling routes to enable children to cycle to school safely. This could result in a reduction in the number of unnecessary car journeys that contribute to air pollution.

The Head of Logistics, Environment and Active Travel, Transport for Greater Manchester, acknowledged the issues raised regarding the levels of pollution measured outside of schools, and commented that consideration needed to be given as to how these are calculated as this could be very technical. It was noted that these local measurements could be very useful to raise awareness of the issue of air pollution locally and promote activity. She said that in regard to the bus fleet they had a good understanding of the condition of the local bus fleet and that the current work

on bus service reform could help to address the issue of older, higher polluting bus vehicles on the regions roads.

The Head of Policy, Partnerships and Procurement said that it was important to note that the work described within the report to meet the legal duty with respect to concentrations of nitrogen dioxide was one element of a wider programme of work, with partners across the region, to address the issue of air pollution. He said that the Government was also due to publish a national clean air strategy in the spring 2018.

The Executive Member for the Environment said that the issue and problems associated with poor air quality was an immediate and real issue for all residents of Manchester. She said that no final decision had been taken and that she welcomed the continued challenge presented by the Committee and Members would continue to be consulted as this area of work progressed. She further acknowledged the work undertaken by the Air Quality Task and Finish Group and that the final recommendations that resulted from their enquiry would help inform a response to the issue of poor air quality. She said that Members could help residents and promote behaviour change around air pollution in their local wards, such as encouraging walking to school that could deliver quick, practical outcomes.

In summing up and suggesting decisions the Chair commented on the tension between media and some Members of Parliament (A) coverage of Air Quality and Health issues which are generally strongly supportive of action on the poor Air Quality experienced in Manchester and Greater Manchester and the urgency and importance of dealing with this and other road challenges; and (B) coverage of possible measures to address these challenges which can sometimes be strongly against these, despite (A).

## **Decisions**

1. To note the report and welcome the connections described between congestion, air quality and active sustainable transport;
2. The Committee welcomes the range of options being explored;
3. The Committee recognises the need for a fair and equitable public transport system and easy, attractive and safe facilities for walking and cycling for all residents as an alternative to car journeys; and
4. The Committee recognises the challenge presented to address the issue of air quality and welcomes the stated commitment to tackle this.

## **NESC/18/11            Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) – Dogs**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Neighbourhoods that provided Members with the outcomes of the recent consultation exercise in respect of Public Spaces Protection Orders relating to the control of dogs.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:-

- A description of the legislative background regarding Dog Control Orders; and
- Information on, and responses to the consultation exercise undertaken following the conversion in October 2017 of Dog Control Orders to Public Spaces Protection Orders.

Proposal to undertake further consultation on the orders which have changed as a result of the initial consultation

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:-

- Were there enough staff to enforce these orders?
- The requirement to balance the need to provide adequate open space for residents to exercise their dogs with the need to keep playing fields free of dog fouling; and
- Welcoming the views of friends groups being taken into consideration.

The Strategic Lead Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety said that enforcement would be proportionate as the overall aim is to achieve compliance but the orders are required for when enforcement is needed. She acknowledged that it is very difficult to catch a dog in the act of fouling and issue a notice to the irresponsible owner. The proposed new order requiring people to demonstrate they have the means to pick up fouling would, therefore, be a more effective enforcement tool. She said that a range of officers could be authorised to issue notices and where appropriate they would undertake targeted enforcement activity in problematic areas.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said that there had been a very good response to the public consultation and he had political oversight of this decision. He said that further consultation would be undertaken in regard to playing fields within parks and whether dogs should be excluded only when the pitches are in use. He said that dog waste could be deposited in general waste bins in parks and this needed to be communicated to residents so that they were aware of this.

## Decisions

The Committee

1. note the report; and
2. welcomes the further consultation exercise to be undertaken on the proposed new orders.

## **NESC/18/12      Alternate methods of weed control being introduced into the grounds management system and the comparative cost of reducing the dependency of Glyphosate within Manchester Parks**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Growth and Neighbourhoods that provided Members with information on the use of Glyphosate to control weeds in parks and open spaces.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:-

- A description of Glyphosate and its use to treat many different weed species;
- Information on the alternative weed treatments considered; and
- Financial considerations.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:-

- What was the current legal status of Glyphosate ?
- Welcoming the use of alternative methods of weed clearing, both in terms of the environment and the welfare of staff administering it; and
- Consideration should be giving to issuing warning signage in those areas that have been treated to alert the public as to its use.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods informed the Committee that the European Union had extended the license for the use of Glyphosate as a method of weed control. He said any staff administering Glyphosate were required to wear protective clothing. He said that being mindful of budgetary pressures consideration would be given to all viable alternative options for clearing weeds and that consideration would be given to displaying notices when Glyphosate treatments had been used in green open spaces.

The Head of Commissioning and Delivery, Neighbourhood Services said that whilst there was still a reliance on Glyphosate to treat and control weeds, especially the most invasive species such as Japanese Knot weed consideration would be given to reducing its use more widely.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

## **NESC/18/13      Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Councillor Nigel Murphy, 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.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- How to improve the rates of recycling in apartment blocks;
- Clarification was sought regarding the collection of domestic side waste and a concern was raised regarding the waste management of housing estates that had been transferred to Housing providers;
- The increase in the incidents of commercial fly tipping; and
- Will there be improvements to the 101 Police non-emergency contact telephone number.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said that fly tipping, whether domestic or commercial was unacceptable and every effort would be taken to identify and prosecute those responsible. He said that side waste should be collected during the normal bin collection and the Biffa waste management contract continued to be

monitored.

He said that recycling rates in apartment blocks needed to improve, however this was challenging as there was not a 'one size fits all' solution, however he remained committed to working with building owners and building management companies to address this issue. With regard to the issue raised regarding the management of estates by housing providers he said he would be happy to raise any concerns that Members had directly with the provider.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said that Manchester had witnessed a 38% decrease in police funding since 2010. He said the Greater Manchester Mayors office had agreed an increase in the Council Tax precept to improve the 101 telephone service and to have more visible police officers in neighbourhoods. He said that this funding should have been made by Central Government. He said that the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee received regular reports on the crime and policing element of his remit.

## **Decisions**

The Committee

1. notes the report
2. requests that a report be submitted for consideration at an appropriate time that provides an update on recycling rates in apartment blocks.

## **NESC/18/14                      Updated Financial Strategy and Directorate Budget and Business Plans 2018-2020**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive and the City Treasurer that provided Members with an update on the Council's financial position and set out next steps in the budget process, including scrutiny of the draft Budget proposals and Directorate Budget and Business Plan reports and accompanying delivery plans by this Committee.

The Committee received and considered the Growth and Neighbourhoods Budget and Business Planning: 2018-2020, the Strategic Development Budget and Business Planning: 2018-2020 and the Corporate Core Budget and Business Planning: 2018-2020, alongside their respective Delivery Plans.

The Committee had been invited to comment on these reports prior to their submission to the Executive on 7 February 2018.

The Deputy Chief Executive Growth and Neighbourhoods informed the Committee that the reports provided an update on the delivery of the three year budget that was agreed in 2017.

The Executive Member for the Environment, the Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources and the Deputy Leader advised the Committee that despite the

financial restraints, a balanced budget continued to be delivered and that the priorities remained the same.

In response to a question in relation to the Council's waste contract, the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said that the savings had been achieved through the renegotiation of the contract following termination of the PFI contract between the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority and Viridor Laing (Greater Manchester). He said that work continued to address the challenge presented to increase the rates of recycling in apartment blocks.

### **Decision**

The Committee

1. welcomes the report and notes that this is the second year of a three year budget;
2. was satisfied that the agreed budget was being delivered with no risks identified;
3. endorses the recommendation that the Executive approves the budget proposals and that these are included in the budget to Council; and
4. agrees to reserve the right to scrutinise areas of service delivery which will be addressed through the Committee's Work Programme.

### **NESC/18/15          Overview Report**

The 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.