

Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2018

Present:

Councillor Igbon – in the Chair

Councillors Chohan, Flanagan, Harland, Hassan, Hughes, Jeavons, Kilpatrick, Lyons, Noor, Reid, Sadler, White and Wright

Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

Councillor Richards, Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration

Councillor Stogia, Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport

Councillor Sameem Ali, Member for Moss Side ward

Councillor Clay, Member for Burnage ward

Councillor Grimshaw, Member for Miles Platting and Newton Heath ward

Councillor Lovecy, Member for Rusholme ward

Councillor Paul, Member for Withington ward

Councillor Shilton Godwin, Member for Chorlton Park ward

Apologies: Councillor Appleby

NESC/18/25 Minutes

The minutes of the 23 May 2018 were submitted for approval. Councillor Harland requested that his apologies be recorded.

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2018 as a correct record subject to the above amendment.

NESC/18/26 Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Performance and Disposal Savings

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Neighbourhoods that provided Members with an update on service changes to waste collections from the apartment sector to achieve collection and disposal savings targets.

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

- Background information regarding the scrutiny process that had agreed the plans for the apartment service change in June 2016 and reviewed progress to implement changes;
- Financial information about the collection and disposal cost of waste and recycling from this property type. The savings targets aligned to the apartment service change, agreed in January 2017 and the investment to improve resident's access to recycling facilities, agreed in March 2018;

- A high level review of the research undertaken to understand the apartment sector and the weighing exercise conducted at each apartment building; and
- An overview of the implementation plan - including the stakeholder communications plan.

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

- Whilst welcoming the ambition to reduce residual waste, concern was raised that Building Managers would pass on the cost to remove any additional residual waste to residents;
- That future reports on this activity included information on the number of incidents where an additional costs had been passed onto the tenants,
- Consideration should be given to reimburse tenants from the savings achieved through the service change if they did incur any additional charge as a direct result of the service change;
- With reference to self-managed apartment blocks what assurance could be given that the correct people with the authority and responsibility for such matters had been consulted upon;
- An assurance was sought that fire safety was paramount, especially with the storage of paper and cardboard. Members wanted and assurance from each apartment block, prior to the service change being implemented that a full fire risk assessment had been undertaken and certification verifying this was submitted to the Authority;
- Studies in Scotland had demonstrated that incidents of fly tipping increased with high density accommodation with high turnover rates of tenants and the costs associated with the removal of fly tipping needed to be offset against the projected savings; and
- Behaviour change was needed to influence and improve recycling rates in this sector.

The Strategic Lead: Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Services responded to the issues raised by Members and said that if residents recycled correctly and separated their rubbish appropriately that would reduce residual waste, however they would continue to monitor fly tipping and this would be reported back to the Committee in future reports. She further commented that the Council did offer a bulky waste collection service for residents. She said that the changes introduced to residual waste bins for houses had improved the recycling rates and contributed to the savings target and the ambition was to replicate this throughout apartment blocks across the city.

The Strategic Lead: Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Services said that she acknowledged the challenges presented by self-managed apartments to understand the established management arrangements, however residents had been consulted with and if Members had any specific apartment blocks where they believed this had not occurred to contact her and this would be investigated.

In response to the proposal from Members that consideration should be given to reimbursing tenants if they incurred a charge imposed by a Building Management Company for any costs to remove residual waste as a result of this service change,

the Director of Neighbourhoods said this would need to be considered as a Policy decision.

In response to the concerns expressed regarding fire safety, the Strategic Lead: Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Services said that the proposals did not represent a material change and building managers would fire risk the storage areas and discussions regarding these proposals had been undertaken with the Fire Service. She added that if additional containers were required these would be provided. Members formally recommended that a signed fire risk assessment, undertaken by the appropriate responsible person for each apartment block be submitted to the Council prior to the implementation of any service change.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said that the levels of recycling in apartment blocks was low and the service change was intended to improve these levels and achieve the required savings. He said that this programme of work commenced in 2010 with regular communications with building managers and residents living in apartment blocks. He said that he had heard the views expressed by the Committee and was committed to working with partners to drive these improvements.

Decisions

The Committee recommend:-

1. That the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods considers the options available to reimburse tenants from the savings achieved through the service change if they incurred any additional charges for the removal of residual waste passed onto them by Building Managers; and
2. That the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods ensures that a signed fire risk assessment, undertaken by the appropriate responsible person for each apartment block be submitted to the Council prior to the implementation of any service change.

NESC/18/27 Road Safety Around Schools

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director Transport, Highways and Engineering that provided Members with further detail to the recommendations made by the Road Safety around Schools Task and Finish Group and how road safety could be improved on the journey to and from school for pupil and parents / carers.

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

- The planned capital investment programme to introduce physical improvements around schools to improve road safety on the journey to school;
- Data on Road Traffic Collisions outside schools;
- The role of Planning in relation to new school developments to ensure that road safety was appropriately considered and built in to new designs;
- Enforcement activities undertaken around schools including GMP;

- How Behaviour change could effectively improve road safety and updates to the School Road Safety Tool-kit; and
- Proposed location for schools to trial red routes and temporary school time road closures.

The Chair had agreed to requests from a number of Ward Members asking to speak on this issue, and the key points that arose from the Ward Members and the Committee's discussions were:-

- Why had some school sites not been identified for improvement works in first phase despite the reported accident data;
- Why was the money not being invested sooner than the reported 2019 date;
- Some wards were not listed as receiving any improvements works in phase one despite repeated concerns raised by local Members;
- Concern over the lack of consultation with local Members;
- Assurance was sought that school crossing patrols would be protected;
- More enforcement activity was required around 20mph zones;
- The need to influence behaviour change to reduce the number of car journeys to schools, particularly short journeys;
- The need to increase the number of schools journeys undertaken by cycling and walking and making these journeys safe for children;
- Had the proposals been presented to the Transport for Greater Manchester Walking and Cycling Commissioner; and
- Had the recommendations of the Road Safety Around Schools Task and Finish Group been taken into consideration.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport said that the safety of all children was important and she recognised the concerns expressed by all Members. She said that a lot of work had already been undertaken to address the issue of congestion and safety around schools at peak times. She said that an assessment of each schools site had been undertaken and Phase One was designed to implement physical improvements to bring as many schools as possible up to a Green RAG rating. She explained that the timescales involved for delivering schemes was lengthy as there needed to be an assessment of the site; a detailed design process; a requirement for legal notifications to be issued and complied with and then a decision had to be taken as to when to implement the works.

She said that importantly was the need to influence behaviour change and this would be achieved through collaborative working with schools and partners.

The Chair said that the Committee required a further detailed report for consideration at the July meeting. The Committee supported this recommendation.

Decision

The Committee recommends that a further report on Road Safety Around Schools be submitted to the July meeting that includes:-

- Collision and Road Safety history for all schools;

- Detailed time scale for the implementation of improvements and funding projections;
- Proposed improvement plans for each school site;
- Information on how schemes had been prioritised including how the RAG ratings had been used in these assessments; and
- What consideration had been given to the findings of the Road Safety Around Schools Task and Finish Group.

NESC/18/28 Extension to Mandatory Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive Growth and Neighbourhoods that provided Members with information on the extension of mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) to cover all properties with 5 or more occupiers living in 2 or more households and sharing amenities, regardless of the number of storeys. The necessary regulations were expected to be brought into force in October 2018.

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

- Providing a definition of a HMO;
- The difference between HMO Licensing and Selective Licensing;
- The proposed changes to HMO licensing from October 2018;
- The estimated increase in the number of licensed HMOs and the associated resourcing implication;
- Information on the calculation of fees for Landlords; and
- An assessment of the impact of licensing in the Private Rented Sector.

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

- Welcoming the measures proposed to extend the scheme to tackle rogue landlords and improve standards for tenants;
- This was an opportunity to promote the good work undertaken by the Council on behalf of residents and to launch a publicity campaign, especially aimed at vulnerable tenants such as students;
- Residents should be encouraged to report properties that they had concerns over;
- Were the costs fixed;
- What was the frequency of inspections for a HMO property;
- Clarification was sought on how Officers time would be spent on enforcement and inspection activities;
- How confident were Officers that the IT system would be ready in time for the go live date;
- The need to monitor the number of eviction notices issued as a result of the extension of this scheme; and
- Concern was expressed regarding the standards of the Bed & Breakfast accommodation that people were often referred to.

The Strategic Lead, Community Safety, Compliance and Enforcement informed the Committee that all properties are currently inspected prior to a HMO licence being granted and a compliance inspection takes place during the term of the licence.. She said that if concerns were received regarding a property these would also be investigated. She said that licence conditions addressed issues of ASB, and if reports of ASB were received officers would work closely with the landlord to help address this. She said that the fee was calculated on a cost recovery basis and the teams would be split so that both inspection and enforcement work was undertaken from the start of the scheme. She further commented that she was confident that the IT system would be ready for the go live date.

The Strategic Lead, Community Safety, Compliance and Enforcement said that the extension of the scheme would bring more landlords within the regulatory regime and this would help address the issue of rogue landlords. She said that landlords did retain the right to regain possession of a property at the end of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy, however if they were to act unlawfully to evict a tenant, Officers would intervene.

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration said that tenants in the Private Rented Sector faced a number of challenges and she was committed to improving the standards across this sector. She said that she was also committed to reviewing the standards within Bed & Breakfast accommodation and the number of eviction notices issued would be monitored. She said that this scheme would be promoted to residents so that they were aware of the changes and landlord responsibilities, including the reporting mechanisms. She said this area of work would inform the design of the Renters Charter that would be reported to the Committee at a future meeting.

Decisions

The Committee:-

1. Supports the extension of mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation to improve standards for tenants living in the Private Rented Sector; and
2. Recommends that an evaluation report be submitted at an appropriate time that includes information on the number of eviction notices issued.

NESC/18/29 Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy

The Committee considered the reports of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and the Executive Member for the Environment, Planning and Transport 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 respective Executive Member's portfolio.

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

- Bus reform was needed to;

- Address the issue of operators using old fleet that was both unreliable and contributed to poor air quality
 - Address issues surrounding the pay and employment conditions of bus drivers; and
 - To ensure that the service provided was fit for purpose and met the needs of Manchester residents.
- Highways investment and repairs needed to prioritise main roads;
 - The maintenance of public spaces need to be improved to ensure they were clear of weeds;
 - The need to undertake more enforcement work, and
 - The Council needed to actively promote the good work that was undertaken and delivered on behalf of the residents of Manchester.

The Executive Member for the Environment, Planning and Transport responded to a request for information regarding a ward level skills audit by advising the Committee that responsibility for this activity was now within the Deputy Leaders portfolio and this recommendation would be referred to the Economy Scrutiny Committee. She said that in relation to clean air the recommendations of the Air Quality Task and Finish Group had been taken into consideration both locally and by Transport for Greater Manchester. Members noted that reports on this area of activity had been scheduled into the Committee's work programme.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods informed the Committee that he would circulate the weed treatment schedule.

Decision

The Committee

1. Recommends that the Economy Scrutiny Committee receive information that provides Members with a ward level skills audit.

[Councillor Hughes declared a personal and non prejudicial interest in this item as he is employed as a bus driver.]

NESC/18/30 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.

The Committee agreed the following changes be made to the work programme:

- The Resident Parking Policy report be considered at the July meeting;
- That the Road Safety Around Schools report be considered at the July meeting;
- That the Manchester Climate Agency Action Plan – Annual Progress Report and the Manchester City Council Change Action Plan be submitted as one report;

- That the item 'Keep Manchester Tidy Campaign Overview' be removed from the July meeting and be considered at the October meeting;
- That the September meeting be dedicated to Housing and Homelessness related items; and
- That Highways reports be considered at the November meeting.

The Chair said that if Members wanted to include anything further to the work programme to contact her directly and she would seek to schedule items at the most appropriate time.

Decisions

The Committee:-

1. Notes the report; and
2. Approves the work programme subject to the above amendments.