

Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 5 September 2018

Present:

Councillor Igbon (Chair) – in the Chair

Councillors Azra Ali, Appleby, Flanagan, Harland, Hewitson, J Hughes, Jeavons, J C Lyons, Noor, J Reid, Sadler, Strong, White and Wright

Also present:

Councillor Akbar - Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

Councillor Richards - Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration

Councillor N Murphy - Deputy Leader

Councillor Stogia - Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport

Councillor Karney - Ward Member for Harpurhey

Councillor A Simcock - Ward Member for Didsbury East

Guy - resident of St Georges, Hulme

Apologies: Councillor Chohan and Hassan

NESC/18/35 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2018 as a correct record subject to the above amendment.

NESC/18/36 Housing Issues

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Housing and Residential Growth which provided information on a range of housing related areas.

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

- Progress on the Selective Licensing schemes and data on the number of evictions as a result of the introduction of these schemes;
- Manchester Move, the name given to the single point of access and a common application process for social housing in Manchester;
- Housing vulnerable people in B&Bs and how B&Bs are inspected;
- Tackling rogue landlords, and the Rental Charter;
- Social Housing and new builds across the city; and
- Northwards ALMO (arms-length management organisation).

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

- Welcoming the positive impact Selective Licensing was having in those areas;
- Welcoming the figures that had shown that evictions had not increased as a result of the introduction of Selective Licensing schemes;
- Support for rolling out the Selective Licensing schemes and the Rogue Landlord Team to other areas of the city to address rogue landlords and poor property management and requested an analysis of the impact of these schemes;
- Consideration needed to be given to the duty of rehousing for repeat perpetrators of anti-social behaviour;
- Why was the reported number of formal action taken against landlords low;
- What were the minimum standard that Bed and Breakfasts had to adhere to, how often are they inspected and were there many complaints from tenants of these;
- Following the regeneration of the Ben Street area of Clayton concern was raised over the reported lack of social housing being offered as part of this scheme;
- Welcoming the partnership approach to delivering Social Housing and New Builds across the City; and
- Would Section 106 funding secured from the developments within the city centre be ring fenced to fund affordable housing in the city centre.

The Strategic Lead Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety said that Bed and Breakfasts that meet the requirements for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing (i.e. 3 or more stories, with 5 or more households sharing amenities such as kitchen and bathroom facilities) are included in the Housing Compliance and Enforcement team's HMO Licensing programme. They are granted a licence for a maximum of 2 years. An inspection takes place on receipt of an application with a further planned inspection to check compliance with the licence. A further unannounced inspection is carried out each year. They are subject to HMO standards. She said these are available on the Council's website and would be circulated to Members for information. She agreed to circulate the numbers of inspections undertaken and informed Members that the number of complaints received from residents of B&Bs was very low which is why the additional unannounced inspection takes place.

With regard to the number of prosecutions of rogue landlords she said that formal enforcement would take place and further information on the figures reported in section 4.3 of the report would be provided to Members. She further confirmed that the Rogue Landlord Team operate city wide.

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration informed the Committee that a review of the allocations policy would be undertaken and consideration would be given to the issues of rehousing perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and the number of bedrooms a family needed would inform part of this review. She agreed that further information would be provided to the Committee on this activity at an appropriate time. The Head of Housing advised that applicants seeking housing could update their circumstances using the on line system.

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration said that she welcomed the comments regarding the positive impact that selective licensing was having in those areas, and whilst mindful of budgetary restraints consideration would be given to

rolling this out into other areas of the city, she said Manchester would also make a submission to the national consultation on selective licensing. In response to the specific question regarding the Ben Street regeneration area she advised that she would discuss this with the Member outside of the meeting. In response to the discussion regarding Section 21 evictions in the private rented sector she said that this was being looked at in consultation with the Manchester Renters Forum. She further commented that she supported the campaign launched by Shelter to support tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit access the private rented sector.

The Director of Housing and Residential Growth said that he welcomed the positive contribution that selective licensing was having in those areas of the city where it was implemented. He reported that an application for funding specifically to invest in affordable and social housing would be made to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and he commented on the positive commitment, in partnership with local providers working in Manchester to deliver such housing across the city, including the use of contributions for Section 106 monies to deliver affordable housing schemes in the city centre area.

Decisions

The Committee:-

1. Welcomes the Executive Members working in collaboration and across portfolios to address the issue of housing in Manchester;
2. Recognise the proactive action taken to support the most vulnerable residents in the city;
3. Support the review of the Allocations System and request that Members are involved in the review;
4. Recommends that a report on Manchester Move be submitted to the Committee for consideration at an appropriate time;
5. Request that Officers circulate the HMO standards to Members;
6. Welcome the commitment given to delivering more social and affordable housing;
7. Recommends that planning applications needed to consider the housing needs of the local population.

NESC/18/37 Update on the work to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping and the Manchester Homeless Strategy

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Lead for Homelessness that provided an update on the work that was taking place to tackle homelessness and people sleeping rough sleeping in the City.

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

- The impact on Manchester of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017;
- Information on the work to tackle people who are sleeping rough;
- The impact of the Cold Weather Provision;
- The new draft Strategy for Homelessness for the City of Manchester that was currently under discussion and would be signed off by the Homeless Partnership in September, for launching on the 10 October, World Homeless Day; and
- The Council's wider action plan for homelessness that would sit below the Strategy.

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

- The appropriateness of placing families in temporary accommodation that extended for periods of up to two years and the impact that this had on children's education and a families wider support network;
- Whilst recognising the success of the Longford Centre what provision was there for homeless people with complex mental health and / or substance misuse issues;
- A City Centre ward Member commented on the excellent work undertaken by the Council's outreach workers with people sleeping rough and the partnership approach to address this issue;
- What were the true numbers of people sleeping rough and how many were there outside of the city centre;
- Members commented on the generous nature of Mancunians who gave money to people sleeping rough but questioned if this was enabling people to remain living on the streets and not helping alleviate the problem;
- There was a clear distinction between street begging and people sleeping rough;
- The impact of austerity and welfare reform on the levels of homelessness;
- Domestic Violence was absent from the Manchester Homelessness Strategy;
- How long were homeless people in B&B accommodation and concern was expressed regarding the condition of these properties;
- How effective was the triage service provided to people who presented as homeless as there was anecdotal evidence of inappropriate service and solutions offered to families, often out of area; and
- Were there any other places that people could present and be assessed rather than having to attend the Town Hall and wait for often long periods of time to be seen and assessed.

Councillor Karney, Member for Harpuhey ward addressed the Committee and said that his ward and the neighbouring ward of Moston were proud to offer support to homeless people but were disappointed to note that both wards had been identified within the report. He further called for additional resources for the wards to help support these residents who are housed in the area. The Deputy Leader apologised to the Member and commented that dispersed accommodation was provided across the city. She said that discussions were ongoing with Housing Providers to look at options for the management of these properties and offer floating support to tenants. She said that work was also ongoing at a Greater Manchester level to resolve this

issue. She further commented that the demands of the Homelessness Reduction Act had to be delivered within existing financial resources.

The Deputy Leader acknowledged the concerns raised by the Members about their constituents and said she was aware of the impact of placing families with children away from their local community. She said that a response to the individual case highlighted by the Member would be provided. She advised that she would be seeking to address the issues raised around travel and emergency funds with colleagues in Children's Services and the Benefits Unit.

The Deputy Leader reported that domestic violence services and support were commissioned through Adult Services and a report on this issue would be considered at the meeting of Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee on 6 September 2018. She assured the Committee that this issue was taken very seriously and that the Homelessness Strategy would be updated before it was presented to the Homeless Partnership.

The Deputy Leader said that the Cold Weather provision had been a success last year and had provided a bed for everyone who was homeless when the temperature fell below zero. She said that they were seeking to extend this emergency provision in the coming year.

The Strategic Lead for Homelessness said that the Homeless Charter Group did review the 'front door' service that was provided for people who present as homeless, currently 80 – 90 per day. She said that in addition to the Town Hall reception young people could attend Centre Point for an assessment and The Riverside Group provided assessments for refugees. She also informed the Committee that they were looking at options to undertake assessments at Etrop Court and that Woodward Court provided accommodation for homeless people with complex needs. She commented that opportunities for delivering assessments in other locations such as day centres, hospitals and the prison are being explored. In response to a question regarding workers case loads she informed the Committee that this was currently at 45 cases. She advised that the automated bidding system would bid for homes on a person's behalf if they were unable to do so themselves, or if they were bidding inappropriately.

The Strategic Lead for Homelessness said that Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust are seeking to increase the number of mental health outreach workers to engage with people sleeping rough. She said that this was an example of partners across the city, both statutory and voluntary working together to respond to the issue of homelessness. She informed the Committee that £0.5m funding had been secured to coproduce rough sleeping initiatives to tackle people sleeping rough. In response to the question regarding numbers of people sleeping rough she advised that the most recent count had identified 127 people sleeping rough in the city centre. The figures for outside of the city centre would be circulated to Members.

The Strategic Lead for Homelessness responded to the comments raised regarding out of area placements. She said that they always tried to avoid this and it was often due to the lack of accommodation available locally. She asked Members to inform the homelessness team of any private landlords that they were aware of in their wards

who would be willing to accommodate homeless people and families. She said that the use of B&Bs was regulated by national guidance and the average stay was currently 14 days.

The Strategic Lead for Homelessness responded to a request for further information on Social Impact Bonds by saying that this was a Greater Manchester project and additional information would be circulated to Members.

The Deputy Leader said that begging was a significant issue in the city centre and in other areas. She said Mancunians were very generous however giving money to homeless peoples was counter productive. She said people should be encouraged to give money to the Big Change Fund as this had demonstrated that people could be supported to move into accommodation and off the streets. She said a campaign would be launched before Christmas to raise public awareness.

Decisions

The Committee welcomes the positive response by the Council and partners to the complex issue of homelessness and to help vulnerable people in the city.

[Councillor Azra Ali declared a personal and non prejudicial interest as an employee of CGL Manchester]

NESC/18/38 Resident Parking Policy

The Committee considered the report of the Operational Director of Highways that invited the Members to consider a new resident parking policy for Manchester. The policy, once approved, would enable the council to move forward in designing, costing and ultimately implementing a sustainable model for residents' parking schemes across the city.

The report informed Members that it would be necessary to come back to a future meeting with detailed proposals including costs, how schemes would be funded and a proposed charging regime once further work on testing existing and potential new schemes against the policy principles had been undertaken.

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

- A background to resident's parking schemes since the introduction of these in the city almost 20 years ago;
- Proposed Principles for Resident Parking Schemes;
- Where schemes should be considered;
- Financial consequences and the need for a clear plan for meeting revenue costs;
- Visitor, carer's and business permits and Blue Badge holders; and
- Information on the proposal to review existing schemes.

The Committee heard from a resident of St Georges, Hulme who had been invited to address the Members to describe the experience of local residents. He informed the Committee:-

- Residents experienced inconsiderate parking on their streets by people who use the streets as a car park;
- Of daily incidents of cars being parked over dropped kerbs, parking on pavements and on double yellow lines;
- Pedestrians were unable to use the pavements as a result of this inconsiderate parking,
- It was not safe for wheel chair users and residents with a disability to use the pavements;
- Bin collection and road sweepers had difficulty accessing the area due to the parking of cars, this had an impact on the cleanliness of the area;
- Concerns had been expressed that in the event of a tragedy, emergency vehicles would be unable to access the area;
- Section 106 funding from local building developments should be used to fund a local resident parking scheme; and
- Residents of St Georges were calling for parity as other resident parking schemes existed in the Hulme area.

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

- Acknowledging that the increase in car use and related parking issues was as a result of the success of the city;
- Acknowledging that more schemes are desperately needed to tackle the blight of commuter parking particularly, but not exclusively in the area surrounding the city centre;
- Acknowledging the financial pressures that new schemes will add to already existing revenue costs;
- Discussions with local residents had highlighted that residents would not be willing to pay for schemes that already existed and had stated that these schemes should remain as they were. There were, however, areas highlighted where residents would be prepared to contribute towards the costs of a scheme;
- Acknowledging the principle of tightening availability of residents visitor permits as they may be subject to abuse, but recognise the reality that residents are visited by multiple friends and visitors;
- Local business such as the Universities, Hospitals and the Etihad Stadium, that were seen to impact on residents parking as a result of their expansion should contribute and pay for residents parking schemes;
- Consideration to Park and Ride schemes should be given at locations across the city;
- Reconsideration should be given to introducing a Congestion Charge in the city, commenting that in addition to parking issues it would further address air pollution and improve traffic management across the city; and
- More needed to be done to improve access as well as encourage and invest on more sustainable forms of public transport across the city which would reduce the reliance on the car as the primary source of transport for people.

The Executive Member for the Environment, Planning and Transport said that she welcomed and acknowledged the views of the Committee and that she did care

about the views expressed by residents. She said that these would be relayed to the meeting of the Executive who would be considering this report at their meeting of 12 September.

Decisions

The Committee proposed the following recommendations for consideration by the Executive:-

1. That Section 106 and Council resources should be use to immediately fund the four schemes identified within the report. (Rusholme, North Manchester General Hospital, Hathersage Road Area and St George's).
2. That all of the current existing resident parking schemes are to remain the same.
3. There should be no cost to residents benefiting from resident parking schemes. Contributions to meet revenue costs for schemes should be sought by the organisation/development causing parking problems e.g. airport, hospitals, stadiums, universities in the first instance. That there should be better balance between controlling abuse of visitor permits and flexibility for more than one visitor per household.
4. Revenue costs and administration costs of those existing schemes should be reviewed and where possible reduced.
5. The Executive to consider and bring forward proposals for implementation of resident parking schemes that were not explicitly referenced within the report should be brought forward and implemented.

NESC/18/39 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.

Decisions

The Committee notes the report and approve the work programme.