

Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 5 December 2018

Present:

Councillor Igbon (Chair) – in the Chair
Councillors Azra Ali, Appleby, Flanagan, Harland, Hassan, Hewitson, J Hughes, Jeavons, Kilpatrick, J C Lyons, J Reid, Sadler, Strong, White and Wright

Also present:

Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods
Councillor Stogia, Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport
Councillor Shilton Godwin, Lead Member for Cycling and Active Travel
Peter Boulton, Head of Highways, Transport for Greater Manchester

Apologies: Councillor Chohan and Noor

NESC/18/51 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2018 as a correct record.

NESC/18/52 Budget 2019/20 Refresh Process: Update for Scrutiny Committees

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive and the City Treasurer which provided an update on the Council's financial position and set out the next steps in the budget process. The report summarised Officer proposals for how the Council could deliver a balanced budget for 2019/20.

In conjunction to the above, the Committee also received and considered the Neighbourhoods Directorate Business Plans and Strategic Development Business Plans for 2019/20, which set out in broad terms the directorate's key priorities, key activities and revenue and capital strategy for 2019/20, which was a refresh of the directorate's Business Plans for 2018/20 in the context of current resources, challenges and opportunities.

Taken together, the report and the directorate Business Plan illustrated how the directorate would work together and with partners to deliver Our Plan and progress towards the vision set out in the Our Manchester Strategy.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committees discussions were: -

- Members recognised the hard work undertaken by staff delivering services in neighbourhoods;

- Members unanimously stated that no consideration should be given to reducing the already stretched neighbourhood services;
- That the results of the BHeard survey are circulated to all Members as soon as the results are available;
- Consideration needed to be given to allocating additional funding to the neighbourhood service;
- A review of the waste contract was required to ensure that it was still fit for purpose;
- Neighbourhoods Services should not be outsourced;
- Following the recent ward boundary changes consideration needed to be given to how resources are allocated across the city to reflect this;
- How did the numbers of staff working in neighbourhood teams compare to other cities of similar size;
- An assurance was sought on the figures relating to business rates;
- How confident was the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods that the savings identified could be achieved from increased rates of recycling;
- Clarification was sought on the reported underspend by Highways and was enough being allocated for the maintenance and repair of footways;
- An assurance was sought regarding that social value was included in the commissioning of services and contracts;
- Consideration needed to be given as to how the Council could generate income;
- What work had been done to support district centres;
- Clarification was sought as to where Social Housing would be built and an assurance was sought that ward members would be consulted with;
- When building social housing consideration needed to be given to the planning and delivery of other services, such as schools and doctor's surgeries to meet the demand of the local population;
- The need to stop the Right to Buy scheme for social housing;
- Public transport and connectivity needed to be improved across the city so that residents could access employment opportunities; and
- What was being done to address homelessness especially for families living in temporary accommodation.

The Deputy City Treasurer responded by saying that the increased revenue from the collection of business rates and the increase in the council tax base had been modelled based on intelligence of the local economy. She said that whilst consideration had to be given to the current uncertainty regarding Brexit there was not enough detail as yet to confirm the likely impact. She also noted the volatility of appeals and that these assumptions are subject to scrutiny by the Council's external auditors. She commented that further information as to how the figure had been calculated would be circulated to the Committee.

The Deputy Chief Executive noted the Members comments regarding staff delivering services in neighbourhoods on behalf of residents. She said that the current proposals did not represent any reduction in service and the proposals would be achieved through efficiencies, such as the waste levy contract and PFI arrangements. She said that she would circulate the savings that had been identified in the 2017/18 budget that would describe these arrangements in further detail.

The Deputy Chief Executive said that income generation could be achieved via an increase in the penalty charge for offences such as littering, with the revenue generated then reinvested into services. She further commented that a commercial strategy would be developed to explore other opportunities such as sponsorships and a review of contracts to generate income that could then be reinvested to support services. She said that the current proposals were in draft form and the business plans would be submitted to the February 2019 meeting for comment prior to the Executive approving the budget.

The Deputy Chief Executive further commented that a significant amount of work had been undertaken, including the Highways Department in relation to social value and district centres. She explained that this activity had been reported and monitored by the Ethical Procurement and Contract Monitoring Subgroup and the District Centre Subgroup respectively.

In response to a Members comment calling for an increase in enforcement activity in relation to flytipping, the Deputy Chief Executive advised that a substantive report describing the work of the Compliance and Enforcement Service would be considered later on the agenda.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said that he recognised that the significant budget cuts imposed by Central Government had an impact on services delivered in local neighbourhoods. He commented that he remained confident that the savings identified in relation to waste and recycling could be achieved. He reported that Phase 1 and 2 of the recycling changes in apartment blocks had been completed and the initial analysis indicating that residual waste had reduced and recycling had increased. He informed Members that Phase 3 and 4 was due to commence and he was confident that the same results would be achieved. He described that this Our Manchester approach demonstrated a commitment to working with, and supporting residents to achieve positive outcomes and achieve the required savings.

The Director of Operation (Highways) responded to the questions regarding the underspend in 2017/18 planned maintenance programme by commenting that the previous winter had been particularly challenging due to the exceptionally bad and long winter. When asked about progress in 2018/19 he noted he was confident that there was the required capacity to deliver the planned programme of work but weather could be a factor again if winter is worse than average.

The Executive Member for the Environment described that when she initially acquired responsibility for highways she undertook a review of the planned programme of work to ensure that all wards received improvement works. She said that social value was incorporated into the procurement activity and staff had been recruited to increase the number of highways inspections undertaken. She commented that all works were planned and managed to minimise the disruption and reiterated the point that appropriate works were undertaken in the winter months and that if all works in year were carried out just in summer the disruption would be considerable.

In response to the comments regarding the reported underspend on Highways the Chair recommended that a report on this would be required for the next meeting of

the Committee, and that this report would include the underspend figures, including for 2017/18; an explanation to the reasons for any underspend; the planned programme of works and information on the capacity to deliver this programme of work.

The Strategic Director (Development) said that all of the land the Council owned would be reviewed to help identify any suitable areas on which to build new homes. He said that he acknowledged the comments regarding consultation with local ward members and gave an assurance that this would be undertaken. He further acknowledged the comment regarding the adequate planning of schools and health services and said this would be taken into consideration as the plans developed, and further reports on this activity would be available next year.

The Strategic Director (Development) further commented that the Council was working with private developers within the National Planning Policy Framework to deliver a range of housing products for Manchester residents. He also informed the Committee that the Spatial Framework and the Local Plan would be available for consideration and comment at the February 2019 meeting of the Economy Scrutiny Committee.

In respect of public transport and connectivity the Strategic Director (Development) explained that the Economy Scrutiny Committee had reviewed this topic, noting the Mayor of Greater Manchester was undertaking a review of bus services across the city region. He further commented that planning conditions linked to employment could also be used when developers are seeking permission.

In response to the questions regarding homelessness the Chair agreed that a briefing note would be provided by officers and circulated to members of the Committee.

Decisions

The Committee: -

1. Note the reports and request that the comments of the Committee be taken into consideration when the final business plans were produced.
2. Requests that a further detailed report on the Highways underspend be submitted to the next meeting. This report would include the underspend figures, including for 2017/18; an explanation to the reasons for any underspend; the planned programme of works and information on the capacity to deliver the programme of work.
3. Requests that a briefing note on homelessness and the actions taken to address this be provided by officers and circulated to members of the Committee.
4. Recommend no further reduction in neighbourhood services.
5. Recommend that the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance explore opportunities to invest additional funding to deliver neighbourhood services.

NESC/18/53 Update on the Delivery of Cycle Schemes and Proposed Principles to Guide the Extension of Cycling and Walking Networks

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive that provided an update on the investment in cycling infrastructure in Manchester, reviewing schemes completed through the first phase of the Cycle City Ambition Grant, summarising proposals currently being developed and, in the light of additional resources being made available through the Mayor's Challenge Fund, proposed an approach that could inform the development of a pipeline of future schemes to encourage higher levels of walking and cycling.

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

- Describing these activities within a policy and strategy context;
- An update on the schemes delivered to date;
- An update on the schemes currently in development;
- Describing the schemes identified for Phase 2 and how these were being developed, including an update on how schools would be connected to the cycle networks;
- An update on the Mayor's Walking and Cycling Challenge Fund and the development of the Beelines Network, an innovative new plan to create a city-region-wide cycling and walking network made up of more than 1,000 miles of routes, including 75 miles of Dutch-style segregated bike lanes; and
- The strategic principals for developing future cycling and walking networks across the city.

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

- The lack of cycle lanes in the north and east of the city compared to the south of the city;
- The need to improve both the bus and metrolink service to the north and east of the city;
- The Rochdale canal footway should be improved to provide a cycle route to connect the north of the city to the city centre;
- The report did not include any information on the provision of cycle storage or consideration as to the use of experimental traffic orders to encourage cycling;
- Consideration needed to be given to illuminating cycling routes, like the Fallowfield Loop to ensure cyclists were safe;
- An analysis of cycling journeys needed to be undertaken with consideration given to linking district centres together with cycle routes;
- The timing of the Chorlton cycle lane consultation was inappropriate and an extension of two weeks was recommended;
- Not enough printed material had been available for the Chorlton cycle lane consultation exercise;
- Concern was expressed that the Chorlton Road corridor consultation exercise was not transparent, with the views of cyclists and residents being dismissed.

The Lead Member for cycling and active travel said that the lack of cycle lanes in the north of the city was recognised. She said to address this the first principal for future

investment schemes had been that the first schemes in a future pipeline should be in parts of Manchester yet to receive significant investment with a particular initial focus on the north of the city.

The Executive Member for the Environment responded to the comments regarding the Chorlton Road corridor consultation exercise. She explained that at this time it was not necessary to extend the period of the consultation, however she would review this when the consultation ended in January 2019. She advised that information had been viewed over 6000 times online; 487 formal responses had been received to date; a number of engagement events had been organised with two future community drop in events planned and printed material had been made available in the libraries and other public places. In addition to this she said the proposals for the scheme had been widely promoted on social media.

A Member commented that the lessons learnt from the planning and delivery of previous schemes, such as the one in Didsbury needed to be learnt, stressing the importance of resident involvement in the design of schemes. The Chair further commented that the response rate to date appeared low considering the planned proposal and recommended that a report on the outcomes of the Chorlton Road corridor consultation exercise, containing all of the responses be submitted to the Committee for consideration at an appropriate time.

In response to specific questions raised regarding proposals for Hyde Road, officers stated that they would discuss this with the Members outside of the meeting.

The Director of Operations (Highways) noted that decisions about schemes in Manchester were made by the Council although there is close working with the cycling commissioner and his team.

Decisions

The Committee: -

1. Recommend that the Executive Member for the Environment extends the Chorlton Road corridor consultation exercise for a period of two weeks following the 11th January 2019.
2. Requests that a report on the outcomes of the Chorlton Road corridor consultation exercise, containing all of the responses be submitted to the Committee for consideration at an appropriate time.
3. Requests that Chris Boardman, Greater Manchester's Cycling and Walking Commissioner be invited to any future meeting when reports on the delivery of cycle schemes are to be considered.

NESC/18/54 Planning and Delivery of Pavement and Footway Maintenance and the Management of Traffic Flow

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive that provided information on the communications associated with highway works and the planning and delivery of pavement and footway maintenance. In addition to the written report the Committee received a presentation from officers from both Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and the City Council on the management of traffic flow. This included an explanation of how roadworks were planned and what measures were taken to respond to events and incidents to try to ensure that traffic flow is effectively managed.

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

- Information on the Highways Communication Strategy;
- Information on roads and footway inspections undertaken in order to identify all defects likely to create danger or serious inconvenience to users of the network or the wider community;
- Information on the planned programmes of footway maintenance work that were developed to prioritise the worst condition footways on the Key Route Network (KRN) and Community Network (CN) and tie in with the road resurfacing programme where possible. Works involved resurfacing or overlay of the existing footway, with kerb replacement where required; and
- Information on how TfGM who had responsibility for the day to day management of the Urban Traffic Control system including the installation and maintenance of traffic signals manage this across the city.

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

- The reported estimated footway that needed repair was a significant amount and was the resources allocated to deliver the scale of works required sufficient;
- Was any of the income generated from pop up events used to repair any damage caused to the pathway;
- The condition of the footways was not user friendly for any resident with a disability and would not pass the age friendly test, especially around district centres;
- The length of time to repair defective footways was too long in many cases; and
- Traffic flow needed to be better coordinated, especially when major events are taking place in the city to minimise the impact on residents.

The Head of Citywide Highways said that he acknowledged the comments regarding the condition of footways, however those conditions were not as challenging as the highway conditions. He advised that they had inherited a backlog of repair work however he was confident that improvements to the footway conditions would be delivered and emergency repairs would always be prioritised. In response to a comment from a Member he commented that inspections of district centres would be undertaken.

The Chair requested that the planned programme of repair work for footways be circulated to Members.

In response to a concern expressed by Members regarding the impact of planned major works scheduled to start in 2019 on both congestion and air quality, the Director of Operations (Highways) advised that a review of the planning for this had already begun. He described that the traffic modelling of these works was being done TfGM so this could then inform the scheduling of the planned work to minimise disruption.

The Head of Highways, TfGM commented that if Members wished to visit the TfGM Control Room this could be arranged.

The Chair invited Members to contact her directly with any issues or concerns regarding the issue of traffic flow management and she would then meet with officers to progress bringing a report back to the Committee at an appropriate time.

Decisions

The Committee: -

1. Requests that the planned programme of repair work for footways be circulated to Members.
2. Agree that Members contact the Chair directly with any issues or concerns regarding the management of traffic flow management and she would then meet with officers to progress bringing a report back to the Committee at an appropriate time.

NESC/18/55 Compliance and Enforcement Service - Performance in 2017/18

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Operating Officer, Neighbourhoods that provided Members with an update on demand for and performance of the Compliance and Enforcement service during 2017/18. The report also provided information on the activities undertaken around enforcement in relation to double yellow line tickets; obstruction of the highways; hot food providers' waste contracts and how these are policed; enforcement activity undertaken by the Licensing and Out of Hours Compliance Team outside of the city centre area; tackling counterfeit goods, with particular reference to the Strangeways area; planning enforcement and legislation relating to the operation of Airbnb.

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

- A description on the various teams that made up the Compliance and Enforcement service;
- Comparative data on the number of requests for service received and the number of proactive activities undertaken;
- An analysis of the main types of complaint received;
- Information on the number of enforcement action taken, including data on prosecutions; and
- Examples were provided to highlight the various activities and the outcomes achieved by the various teams.

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

- Welcoming the reported activities to investigate and prosecute those responsible for flytipping;
- Noting the increase in prosecutions particularly for flytipping and querying how this has been achieved and how the total amount of fines compares to previous years.
- Noting the increase in noise nuisance complaints particularly in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and querying whether the fees raised from the extension to Mandatory HMO licensing provided additional resources for enforcement.;
- Noting that London Authorities had powers to require businesses to comply with strict time banded collections, which only allowed the collection of commercial waste at defined times and whether this could be introduced in Manchester city centre;
- Would enforcement action be taken if someone parked on a double yellow line that was faded;
- In recognition of the issues surrounding the Strangeways area, consideration should be given to having a dedicated officer dealing with this area;
- What is the process for moving from working with people and businesses to achieve compliance to more formal action when they fail to comply; and
- With the increase in development there were a lot of issues related to the construction industry and what was being done to address this.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods stated that the compliance teams had adopted the Our Manchester approach to work with residents and businesses to improve the physical environment. He said that officers would always work with businesses in the first instance to address any issues associated with commercial waste, however accepted the point raised by a Member that in some instances enforcement action was required sooner to prevent an issue from escalating.

The Strategic Lead, Compliance Enforcement and Community Safety welcomed the recognition of the work undertaken by the Environmental Crimes Team to drive the number of prosecutions. She explained that where prosecutions are secured the fines imposed by the courts go to the treasury rather than the local authority but we are generally awarded the costs we have incurred from taking the prosecution forward. She further explained it is important to prosecute e.g. fly tipping offences and publicise the outcomes as it sends out the clear message that this anti-social behaviour would not be tolerated.

She explained that licensing of HMOs is self-financing. In respect of dealing with noise complaints the licensing and out of hours' team take action to deal with this and having a team that concentrates on areas outside of the city centre has enabled more effective action to be taken including noise from HMOs.

In response to the comments made regarding replicating the powers that London Authorities had in relation to the collection of commercial waste the Strategic Lead, Compliance Enforcement and Community Safety said that Manchester, as part of the Core Cities Group were currently working together including meeting with civil servants to seek similar powers for core cities.

In response to the comments made regarding replicating the powers that London Authorities had in relation to the collection of commercial waste the Strategic Lead, Compliance Enforcement and Community Safety said that Manchester, as part of the Core Cities Group were currently lobbying central government.

The Strategic Lead, Compliance Enforcement and Community Safety acknowledged the comments made regarding the Strangeway area stating that the issues are long standing and entrenched. She described that the Council had used Closure Order powers to disrupt criminal and anti-social behaviour and work is ongoing with a range of partners to target properties and prosecute individuals. She explained that due to the sensitivity of this activity it would be appropriate to provide a briefing note to Members regarding planned activities.

The Strategic Lead, Compliance Enforcement and Community Safety further commented that it will be through redevelopment of the area that real and lasting change would be achieved.

In response to the question asked regarding double yellow lines, the Head of Citywide Highways explained that a judgement would always be made by officers as to the justification for issuing a penalty notice. He said that officers always needed to witness an offence taking place and photographic evidence was taken to support the penalty.

The Head of Planning, Building Control and Licensing informed Members that her department worked closely with developers to minimise and mitigate the worst impacts on local residents. She described that this was achieved by agreeing a development management plan and working closely with colleagues in the Environmental Protection Team.

Decision

The Committee recommends that a briefing note on the planned activities for the Strangeways area be prepared by officers and circulated to members of the Committee.

NESC/18/56 Draft Terms of Reference and Work Programme for the Behaviour Change and Waste Task and Finish Group

The Committee considered the report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit that set out the proposed terms of reference and work programme for the Behaviour Change and Waste Task and Finish group.

The Committee were invited to agree the membership of the Task and Finish Group; agree the terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group and agree the work programme of the Task and Finish Group, which would be reviewed by the group at each of its meetings.

Decisions

1. To appoint Councillors Hassan, Hughes, Jeavons, Kilptraick, Lyons, Reid, Wright as members of the Behaviour Change and Waste Task and Finish group.
2. The Committee approved the terms of reference and the work programme of the Task and Finish Group.

NESC/18/57 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.

A Member commented that consideration needed to be given to the number of items on future agendas so as to allow enough time to scrutinise each item thoroughly.

The Chair informed the Committee that she would be meeting with Officers at the rise of this meeting to discuss the Work Programme and agree the items that were to be scheduled.

Decisions

The Committee notes the report and approve the work programme.