

Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 6 March 2019

Present:

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

Also present:

Councillor S Murphy, Deputy Leader
Councillor Stogia, Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport
Councillor Richards, Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration
Councillor Paul, Ward Councillor for Withington
Jonny Sadler, Manchester Climate Change Agency

Apologies: Councillor Hewitson

NESC/19/13 Minutes

A recommendation was proposed and seconded to amend a section within item NESC/19/09 to the following:

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration welcomed the support for the stated commitment to deliver social and affordable housing for Manchester residents and reiterated the points made regarding the unfair budget cuts year on year. She said the enforcement team had issued over £250,000 in Civil Penalties to landlords to date and once recovered, this money would be reinvested back into the enforcement team. She further informed the Committee that the Council had been successful in a bid to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for further funding for work to address Rogue Landlords.

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration further commented that an evaluation of the Selective Licensing scheme would be undertaken and this would inform discussions in regard to if this scheme would be extended into other areas, and due to the broadening of HMO licencing the team would be expanded to cover the new properties now covered by HMO licencing.

Decisions

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2019 as a correct record subject to the above amendment.

To note the minutes of the Behaviour Change and Waste Task and Finish Group meeting of 21 January 2019.

NESC/19/14 Update on Homelessness and Housing

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Adult Services and the Strategic Director, Development that provided an update on the work that was taking place to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the City; the use of temporary accommodation within the homeless service, including the inspection regime; and an update on Manchester Move and the Social Housing Allocations Policy.

The Deputy Leader referred to the main points and themes within the report which included: -

- Homeless presentations had continued to rise compared to the previous financial year, in common with the growing picture across Greater Manchester and the UK;
- Describing the work that was taking place to support people who were sleeping rough in the city;
- An update on the Bed for Every Night initiative and the provision from April 2019;
- An update on the Rough Sleeping Initiative;
- The work progressed to work with the two Coroners for Manchester in order to improve the investigation and monitoring of homeless deaths;
- An update on dispersed temporary accommodation and the ongoing work to improve the standard of this accommodation;
- Information on the inspection of properties and the action plan that was being progressed;
- Describing the activities to safeguard families in dispersed accommodation;
- The approach taken to increase the number of large homes available for rehousing homeless families;
- An update on Bed and Breakfast Accommodation, noting there had been a significant increase in the number of single presentations occurring in January 2019;
- Describing the work to establish a hospital discharge protocol to reduce the number of people who present as homeless upon discharge from hospital;
- An update on Homeless Commissioned Services;
- The joint work with Children's Services to develop a new pathway model which will better meet the needs of all young people in the city, including care leavers and young people with complex needs;
- The work of the Section 21 team that had been established within the Housing Solutions service to work with households who had received a valid S.21 notice but remained in occupation of that property prior to eviction through the courts system;
- An update on the work of the Private Rented Sector team;
- Information on the Homefinder service and how this could be used as a resource to secure accommodation for homeless households;
- Describing the initiative to maximise Social Housing Stock;
- An update on Manchester Move, the Manchester Housing Allocation Scheme that set out the principles and rules by which people apply for social housing, including who qualified to join the housing register and how the Council prioritises who got a home;
- An update on Social Housing in Manchester, noting that there was currently under 68,000 social homes in Manchester; and

- Information on the Manchester Housing Register (MHR) and choice-based lettings (CBL) noting that the allocations scheme was currently being reviewed given the rising levels of homelessness and the cost of providing temporary and supported accommodation.

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

- Homelessness was an issue that was taken very seriously by the Council and despite the continued funding cuts remained committed to addressing;
- Did the Outreach Team work outside of the city centre area;
- What was the current case load for floating support workers;
- A visit for Committee Members to meet the Floating Support Teams and accompany them during visits should be arranged;
- Did people accessing services need to pay any fee and/or travel costs, as there was a conception amongst some members of the public that this was the case;
- Was data available on the age, gender and race of people who were homeless;
- What standards were applied when assessing temporary accommodation to ensure it was appropriate and safe for people;
- The numbers of Section 21 notices issued (notice to quit an assured short hold tenancy) appeared to be increasing and what was being done to support people who were issued with one by their landlord;
- What was being done to understand the lessons learnt following the death of a homeless person;
- Further information was sought on the progress to purchase properties to accommodate larger families;
- What support was offered to people who presented as homeless but did not have a Manchester connection;
- What support was being offered to pay for transport costs for travel to school for those families who were temporarily accommodated out of area;
- Were homeless people involved in the design of services and were homeless people being engaged with in the City Centre Public Space Protection Order consultation exercise;
- Noting that people could have to wait a long time to have their homeless assessments completed when attending the Town Hall and this could be stressful and intimidating for people and what was being done to improve this;
- What was being done to support those individuals and families who were homeless as a result of domestic violence and abuse; and
- What was the time scale to complete the reported action plan that had been put in place to work with emergency accommodation owners to improve standards in accommodation.

The Deputy Leader stated that the A Bed for Every Night (ABEN) had been designed to provide a bed every night for people sleeping rough in Greater Manchester from early November until the end of March and that funding had been secured to extend this service to the end of April. She stated that this service had proved to be very successful and that this had created further demands on the service that presented a challenge. She confirmed that people did not have to pay a fee to access this service and if referred, assistance with transport costs could be provided. She advised that an analysis of the people accessing this service would be undertaken and this

information would be provided in future reports.

The Deputy Leader recognised the comment regarding the increased use of Section 21 notices by landlords in the Private Rented Sector. She said that a dedicated team had been established to work with people who had been served with a notice and to date 58 households had been supported. She informed the Committee that it had been established that approximately half of the notices issued were invalid and, of the ones that weren't, officers negotiated with landlords to allow people to remain in the property whilst alternative, appropriate accommodation was secured. She stated that it was very important to refer people as early as possible for support from this service.

The Director of Housing and Residential Growth further informed the Committee that a wider review of how the Private Rented Sector could be managed and influenced would be undertaken. Members supported this and requested that they be kept informed of this work and consulted with.

The Deputy Leader informed the Committee that the service was working closely with Children's Services to find solutions to the challenges experienced by families who were placed temporarily outside of the area, such as meeting the costs incurred with travel to school. In addition, she reported that work was ongoing with Children's Services to develop a protocol to support young people who were leaving care to protect them from homelessness. She further commented that consideration was being given to commissioning specific housing support for victims of domestic violence and abuse.

The Deputy Leader noted the tragic deaths of homeless people in the city and commented that it was understood that there was a link nationally between deprivation and homeless deaths. She said it would be very difficult to provide analysis of deaths of homeless people by ward level, however there is a thematic Safeguarding Adults Review being undertaken to understand any lessons that could be learnt, noting that this was a very complex issue. Work was also progressing with the Coroner's office to review future any deaths to better understand every incident. She further informed the Committee that she was a member of The Manchester Homelessness Partnership that included people with personal experience of homelessness and Public Space Protection Order would also be discussed at that forum. She stated that the City Centre Public Space Protection Order was designed to address anti-social behaviours and not criminalise homeless people.

The Strategic Lead for Homelessness reported the case-load for floating support staff was currently 36. She said that work was being done to reduce this figure and an additional team had been established to support people moving on into affordable accommodation. She confirmed that the Floating Support Team was proactive and services were delivered in areas outside of the city centre with the same support offered. She supported the recommendation that Members of the Committee visit the Floating Support Team. In response to a request from a Member she confirmed that the Homelessness Prevention Strategy would be circulated to Members for information. She advised the Committee that the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), a risk-based evaluation tool to help local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies

identified in dwellings was used to assess properties and that information on this would be circulated. She further informed the Committee that a tender document was out for a Registered Housing Provider to take over the management of temporary accommodation, noting that this would allow for the maximum housing benefit to be awarded so the Council would be penalised for the move from the Government Temporary Management Fund to the Flexible Support Grant.

The Strategic Lead for Homelessness said that the Authority had a legal duty to provide advice and assistance to those people that did not have a local connection and that a reconnection service was offered whereby travel costs would be paid to allow people to return to their home area. In response to the comments regarding the requirement to present at the Town Hall for a homelessness assessment she acknowledged the concerns expressed by the Committee. She said that consideration was being given to identifying other appropriate locations where this service could be delivered and to simplify the process for applications as a way of better supporting people, commenting that Centrepoint provided a single point of contact for young people.

The Director for Housing and Residential Growth said that the process for purchasing the 62 homes to accommodate larger families had taken longer than expected due to the need to agree a legal mechanism to protect the Council's c£5m stake and legal agreements needing to be signed off by a number of Registered providers, however this was imminent. He said that it was recognised that this programme was a priority and he understood that Registered Providers had already acquired and identified for acquisition around 10 properties in anticipation of the agreement being signed. Additional properties would continue to be identified for possible purchase. He stated that Members would be kept informed of this progress and agreed to submit a written update to the next Committee meeting.

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration informed the Committee that a review of the allocations policy would be undertaken that would involve consultation with Members. She said that this needed to be considered in conjunction with the Affordable Housing Policy that had been agreed the previous December. She described that the provision of social housing was being reviewed across Greater Manchester and stated that the Right To Buy scheme needed to end and grant funding was required to build new social housing and replace those properties lost through Right To Buy.

Decision

The Committee;

1. Note the report and support the response to the serious issue of homelessness in the city;
2. Recommend that a visit to the Floating Support Teams be arranged for Members of the Committee;
3. Request the Homelessness Prevention Strategy be circulated to Members; and

4. Request that information on the housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) be circulated to Members.

[Councillor Azra Ali declared a personal and non prejudicial interest as she is employed by CGL Manchester and the Chair of Saheli Asian Women's Project.]

NESC/19/15 Greater Manchester's Clean Air Plan - Tackling Nitrogen Dioxide Exceedances at the Roadside - Outline Business Case

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Solicitor that summarised the key features of Greater Manchester's feasibility study and its Outline Business Case (OBC) to reduce nitrogen dioxide exceedances in Manchester and across Greater Manchester (GM) in the shortest possible time. This OBC had been developed by Manchester City Council collectively with all Greater Manchester local authorities and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), and co-ordinated by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) in line with Government direction and guidance.

The main points and themes within the report included: -

- Describing the context and background to the report;
- Noting that poor air quality was the largest environmental risk to the public's health;
- The legal background;
- Information on the Government's UK Air Quality Plans;
- Noting that TfGM had been coordinating the GM feasibility study on behalf of the ten Greater Manchester local authorities, who remain legally responsible for reducing NO₂ to legal Limit Values; and
- Noting that the feasibility study process comprised a series of steps and processes, namely: Strategic Outline Case, Initial Evidence and Target Determination, Outline Business Case and Full Business Case.

The Committee had been invited to comment on this report prior to its submission to the Executive on the 13 March 2019.

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

- Consideration needed to be given to supporting small business through an appropriately funded vehicle replacement scheme;
- Members questioned the reason why private cars were not included in the vehicles affected by the proposed Clean Air Zone;
- Bus companies needed to take responsibility for their polluting vehicles that had a significant impact on the health outcomes of Manchester residents;
- Had social and economic impact assessments been undertaken;
- Priority should be given to supporting local taxi businesses to improve their fleet;
- Transport poverty was an issue and more investment was required in public transport infrastructure across all of the city to encourage people not to use their car and to link people to employment opportunities;
- Publicity campaigns should be targeted at people not using public transport;

- Electric vehicles remained expensive and there was a lack charging points; and
- The consultation exercise, when launched, should involve ward coordination to ensure that as many residents as possible were engaged with this agenda.

The Committee then heard from Councillor Paul, Ward Councillor for Withington. He stated that he was disappointed with the proposals and the outline timescales, commenting that immediate action was required to address the harmful effects of pollution caused by vehicles. He questioned why private cars had not been included in the proposed plan, commenting that the vast majority of vehicles on the road were private cars, and the many of these were not compliant with emission standards. He further suggested that consideration needed to be given to other courses of action, such as introducing car free days.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport stated that buses were one of the biggest contributors to poor air quality, noting the recent press reports that had included statements from local bus companies and said that she had found these to be very disappointing. She described that the objective of any penalty in a Clean Air Zones was for all vehicles which drove within the area of a Clean Air Zone to have engines which complied with emissions standards. The objective of the Clean Air Zone was to bring about reductions in emissions from vehicles and not to raise money. The proposals did not amount to a congestion charge. In regard to the issue of private cars she said that that option would not have delivered compliance any faster than the proposed way forward, and would not perform effectively in terms of reducing human exposure. An important consideration in this respect was that the average private car was not used for 95% of the time whereas other vehicles were used much more intensively.

In response to the comments regarding support for sole traders and small businesses she said that Clean Air Zones would not be introduced without the correct funding package for such businesses being supported by central government.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport said that a communications campaign had been launched before Christmas that had been well received and a further campaign would be launched from May to coincide with the public consultation exercise that would then inform the final plan.

The Head of City Policy informed the Committee that work was currently ongoing across Greater Manchester to consider standards for the taxi trade and this included discussions regarding emissions standards. He indicated that funding to help taxi and private hire drivers transition to cleaner vehicles would only be made available to vehicles registered in Greater Manchester. This may be one measure that will support efforts to reduce the number of vehicles that are registered with authorities outside Greater Manchester operating here. He further informed Members that an Equalities Impact Assessment of the proposals had been produced and that this was available as a background document to the report and had been circulated in advance of the meeting. In response to a question from a Member he acknowledged that there were other sources of pollution, however this report specifically dealt with Nitrogen Oxide Exceedances at the roadside, and other policies and strategies would address other sources of pollution.

Decision

The Committee note the report and endorse the recommendations that the Executive:

1. Note that the Council is legally obliged to produce a feasibility study to identify the option which will deliver compliance with the requirement to meet legal limits of nitrogen dioxide following the Secretary of State issuing a direction under the Environment Act 1995;
2. Adopt the feasibility study undertaken to date;
3. Approve the OBC (for submission to the government's Joint Air Quality Unit);
4. Note that further stakeholder engagement and public consultation is an essential part of the process to help inform and refine ongoing work to produce a Full Business Case by the end of the calendar year;
5. Approve the commencement of the public conversation and engagement activity from 15 May 2019;
6. Note that further reports will be submitted to Executive on:
 - a) the proposals for statutory consultation, informed by the outcome of the public conversation and engagement.
 - b) formal approval of the Full Business Case.
7. Agree that Transport for Greater Manchester continue with the activity to produce the Full Business Case on behalf of the ten Greater Manchester authorities, under the direction of the Greater Manchester Clean Air Steering Group; and
8. Delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Executive Member for Transport, Planning and the Environment the approval of submission of supplementary information.

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

NESC/19/16 Manchester Zero Carbon 2038 - Manchester City Council's Commitment

The Committee considered the report of the Head of City Policy, that noted that in November 2018, the Committee and Executive had agreed to the establishment of a science-based carbon reduction target for Manchester. This required the city to become zero carbon by 2038. Since then, the Manchester Climate Change Board, with the support of Anthesis, had developed a guide to support organisations in Manchester to play their full part in achieving this commitment. They had also developed a draft zero carbon framework 2020-2038 and started work to produce a draft action plan for 2020-25. This report set out a framework for future action, the citywide progress that had been made since November 2018 and the specific contribution being made by the Council.

The Committee had been invited to comment on this report prior to its submission to the Executive on the 13 March 2019.

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

- Noting that the Our Manchester Strategy set out the vision for Manchester to “be in the top flight of world-class cities by 2025” and committed the city to “playing our full part in limiting the impacts of climate change.”
- The Council supported the Manchester Climate Change Board (MCCB) to take forward work to engage partners in the city to address climate change;
- Noting that the Council had adopted a science-based carbon budget which was developed by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research and committed the city to becoming zero carbon by 2038;
- Manchester’s carbon budget was broken down into short, medium and long term allocations. Each carbon budget outlined the emissions not to be exceeded for each period, in order to ensure that Manchester met its overall emission reduction commitments to 2038;
- Information on the Draft Zero Carbon Framework 2020-2038 and Action Plan 2020-22;
- Information on the Council’s Draft Action Plan, noting the initial action plan which outlined the high level actions that the Council would undertake between April 2019 and March 2020 in order to produce a comprehensive action plan by March 2020;
- This topic should be a regular agenda item at ward coordination meetings to ensure that as many residents as possible were engaged with this agenda; and
- It was recognised that residents needed to be engaged in a meaningful way to ensure they are able to contribute to the ambitious targets.

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

- The importance of retrofitting domestic properties and what was being done to support this activity;
- Consideration needed to be given to developing green jobs that could then link into local colleges to develop green skills and employment;
- It was important to engage all sections of the community in this agenda to deliver the required outcomes and Ward Coordination meetings and Neighbourhood Teams should be utilised to raise awareness of this important issue;
- More needed to be done to raise awareness as to the urgency of this issue;
- Expressing concern that the Greater Manchester Pension Fund continued to invest in fossil fuels and what was being done to address this;
- Park and Ride schemes should be established to encourage people to use alternative forms of transport, rather than cars; and
- The Chair suggested that she would meet with the Executive Member to discuss options for progressing this work through neighbourhoods.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport said that she welcomed the continued support and suggestions from the Committee to deliver this important commitment. She informed the Committee that a comprehensive delivery plan would be presented in 2020, however it was important that actions were taken straight away that involved all residents of Manchester in an ‘Our Manchester’ approach. She said the importance of achieving the carbon reductions could not be underestimated and all citizens of Manchester would play an active role in delivering this. She said the bold and pioneering commitment given by Manchester to adopt a science based carbon budget was recognised both nationally and internationally.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport said that discussions were ongoing with the Greater Manchester Pension Fund regarding their investment in fossil fuels and an announcement on this issue could be imminent. Further information is expected at the Greater Manchester Green Summit on 25 March 2019.

Jonny Sadler, Manchester Climate Change Agency set out the urgency of this agenda; Manchester has formally agreed a science based carbon budget of 15 million tonnes CO₂ for 2018-2100. Annual emissions are currently approximately 2 million tonnes, meaning that the carbon budget will be spent by 2025 unless urgent action is taken. Mr Sadler commented that the leadership in this area expressed by Manchester and the Council was widely recognised nationally and internationally; but that work was needed to maintain this leadership. He noted the carbon budget and the emissions against this to date, stating that actions needed to be implemented immediately to improve emissions and that it was important that Members, with their local knowledge engage with their local residents and businesses to promote this activity, raise awareness and influence behaviour change. In regard to retrofitting housing he advised that Social Housing providers were committed to delivering this, however challenges existed for home owners and those in the private rented sector. He said there were a number of small initiatives to support this but scaling this up is urgently needed, through working with MCC and partners.

Mr Sadler fully endorsed the comments regarding green skills and employment and said that there was an opportunity to ensure these important connections were made in the city's Industrial Strategy. He advised that the importance of reducing carbon emissions was recognised and incorporated into a range of wider policies, such as health, noting that this would also allow partners to think creatively regarding funding opportunities. In regard to comments made regarding the membership of the Manchester Climate Change Board he stated that all partners acted to reduce their own emissions (MCCB members are responsible for 20% of the city's total) and to influence behaviour change across the city. He said that he fully supported Members engaging with their communities to promote this activity and said he would be very keen to encourage them to do more by providing examples of community activities for Members to consider utilising or adapting. He further supported the recommendation proposed by the Chair that carbon reduction should be a standing item at ward coordination meetings.

Decision

The Committee note the report and endorse the recommendations that the Executive:

1. Endorse the draft Manchester Zero Carbon Framework as the city's overarching approach to meeting its science-based climate change targets over the period 2020-38, as part of the wider Our Manchester policy framework;
2. Commit to work with partners to develop the final Framework and Action Plan for 2020-22 by March 2020, at the latest;

3. Commit to implement the Council's actions for 2019/20, as set out in Appendix 2;
4. Commit to produce a detailed action plan for the Council's climate change work during 2020-22, in terms of both direct, organisational emissions; and the influencing and enabling role that the Council can play through its planning, procurement, regulatory and other powers.
5. Commit to work with partners to secure the resources the city requires to commence full implementation of the Framework 2020-38 and Action Plan 2020-22, from April 2020.

NESC/19/17 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.

Members noted that an Annual Work Programming Session was scheduled for the May meeting and requested that the following items should be scheduled for consideration at the appropriate time in the new municipal year; Section 21s, an update on the City Centre Public Space Protection Order consultation exercise, an update on the landlord licensing schemes, Highways Investment Programme update, Cycle Lanes and an update on waste and recycling.

Decisions

The Committee notes the report and approves the work programme subject to the above comments.