

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 11 January 2022

Present:

Councillor Hacking - In the Chair

Councillors Shaukat Ali, Andrews, Chambers, Connolly, M Dar, Evans, Hilal, Hussain, S Judge, Rawson, Wills and Wilson

Also present:

Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

Councillor Rawlins, Executive Member for the Environment

Councillor Igbon, Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee and Ward Councillor for Hulme

Councillor Ahmed Ali, Ward Councillor for Rusholme

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester

Baroness Beverley Hughes, Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester

Nicky Boothroyd, MCRactive

Louise Harding, MCRactive

Apologies:

Councillors Azra Ali and Whiston

CESC/22/1 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021 as a correct record.

CESC/22/2 Crime and Policing

The Committee welcomed Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, and Baroness Beverley Hughes, Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester.

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

- That Ward Councillors across Greater Manchester had been raising concerns about the performance of Greater Manchester Police (GMP) over a number of years but that it had taken the report of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) for action to be taken and how could Ward Councillors be involved and make their voices heard in future;
- Serious youth violence, including the need for a trauma-informed approach and for improved information-sharing;
- How much could realistically be achieved given the funding cuts;
- The closure of police stations and the loss of that as a link between the public and the police;
- What was being done to improve the 101 non-emergency telephone number;
- Concern about the level of communication with victims of crime after they had reported the crime; and

- Concern about an increase in car crime and burglaries and a lack of visible policing on the streets.

Andy Burnham informed Members that he had had concerns about GMP when he was an MP and that he had brought that experience into the role of Mayor of Greater Manchester. He outlined the journey from 2017, when he was elected as Mayor, to the HMIC inspection of 2020, which had judged that the service provided to victims of crime by GMP to be a serious cause of concern. As part of this, he highlighted the review of how GMP and partner agencies had responded to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), the Kerslake Report into the preparedness for and response to the Manchester Arena Attack and issues with GMP's computer system, which he advised, the Deputy Mayor had asked for a review of. He reported that these had created a picture of the issues within GMP, the final piece of which had been the HMIC report, which had made it clear that fundamental change was needed, resulting in the decision to change the leadership of GMP. In response to the Member's question about how Greater Manchester could avoid getting into this situation again in future and how Members could be involved, he recognised the importance of engagement with local Councillors and highlighted the introduction of named accountable police teams at a neighbourhood level and meetings with local Councillors and MPs, including police accountability processes taking place in public. He advised that improvements had been made in GMP and that he felt confident that further positive changes would be seen in 2022.

Baroness Hughes agreed that the involvement of local Councillors in contributing to, monitoring and scrutinising changes was essential and advised that this was best focused at the local level. She outlined the changes to the leadership structure since the new Chief Constable had started, including the appointment of new Chief Superintendents for each borough, and how these changes contributed to improved partnership working, communication and problem solving in neighbourhoods. She encouraged Members to engage at a local level and recommended that the Committee meet with their Chief Superintendent, if they had not already done so. She informed the Committee how the new Chief Constable was holding meetings with officers, down to sergeant level, communicating the new ethos, following which officers were committing to a pledge about their role in the locality.

Andy Burnham advised Members that the importance of a trauma-informed approach was recognised across public services in Greater Manchester and that, once this approach was adopted, it changed the ways of thinking and approaches to supporting people in relation to a range of issues, including CSE and homelessness. He offered to provide a note to the Member who had raised this on the adoption of the trauma-informed approach across Greater Manchester.

Andy Burnham informed Members that, although funding cuts from 2010 to 2017 had negatively impacted on GMP, there were already issues with the internal culture of the organisation and that the way the cuts had been implemented had also been part of the problem. He highlighted the decision in 2017 to introduce the precept on Council Tax to provide additional funding to GMP which had enabled them to recruit more police officers and advised that central funding was no longer being reduced and GMP was now receiving an uplift in funding. He advised that last year he had not felt it appropriate to give GMP the full precept that they were asking for, following

the concerns that had been raised about their performance, but that, with changes having been made and the new leadership, it was important now to provide this additional funding; however, he emphasised that his focus was not just on funding levels but the implementation of the Chief Constable's Plan and making improvements in key areas such as the response on the 101 non-emergency telephone number. He encouraged Members to hold their local police teams to account for delivering on GMP's commitments.

In response to a question from the Ward Councillor for Hulme, Andy Burnham highlighted the work of the Violence Reduction Unit, in particular work on a community-led approach to serious youth crime and violence, including a number of pilots across Greater Manchester, one of which was in Moss Side, and the learning that was coming out of those pilots. He advised that he would welcome the Ward Councillor's input into those pilots. In response to the question about police stations, he stated that, while it was not possible to revert to the previous situation of having police stations in every area, as part of the move to having a named accountable team in each neighbourhood, it would be possible to have a base or some way for the public to physically access that team, for example, through a regular surgery at a local library. He advised that enabling people to have access to their neighbourhood police team was important in connecting the teams to their communities and building relationships, recognising that not everyone would want to use online communication.

In response to the question on serious youth violence, Baroness Hughes recognised that information-sharing was key, not only where a homicide had taken place but to identify a young person in difficulty at an early stage and to intervene to protect them. She outlined the multi-agency approach of the Violence Reduction Unit and the community involvement in the pilots taking place. She highlighted the Bill currently going through the House of Lords which would place a duty on local authorities, the police and a number of other agencies, to collaborate to prevent serious violence, including information-sharing.

In response to a question about domestic abuse, Andy Burnham reported that the Gender-Based Violence Strategy had been published last year. He advised that culture change was needed both in the way victims were supported and in relation to the casual harassment of and unacceptable behaviour towards women and girls, noting the link between this and more serious abuse, and he informed Members that the new Gender-Based Violence Board was working on these issues. In response to a question about GMP's IT system, iOPs, he advised that large parts of this did now work well but one part of the system, PoliceWorks, had not been working properly, that a review of PoliceWorks was underway and that a decision on how to resolve this was due to be made in the early part of this year.

Andy Burnham reported that GMP now had the right leadership and the right policy in place and that, with local politicians holding them to account, significant improvements could be expected. He informed the Committee that he would happy to come back to them in future.

Baroness Hughes informed Members that a new Chief Superintendent had been appointed to lead the contact centre which dealt with 101 and 999 calls and crime recording and the process of grading and responding to incidents. She advised that

this new Chief Superintendent had an excellent track record and detailed plan for improving the service and, having identified that this area was under-resourced, a recruitment exercise was taking place. She advised that the recording of crime had significantly improved but recognised the Member's point about contact with victims after they had reported a crime and outlined some of the approaches being trialled to address this, including an appointment system for officers to visit victims in serious but non-urgent cases, training for officers on what was expected of them and contact cards for officers to hand out. In response to a Member's question about what was being done to address issues in the Cheetham area, she advised that she had raised this with the Chief Constable. She reported that organised criminal gangs were at the root of the problem but that it created a lot of other kinds of crime and disorder which affected local people. She advised that work was periodically taking place in the area to disrupt this activity and reported that the National Crime Agency was also working on this issue but that international gangs were behind this which made it difficult to disrupt. She reported that identifying and pursuing leaders of serious and organised crime was one of GMP's areas of strength. In response to a Member's question, she outlined the approach and purpose of Operation AVRO, a force-wide initiative that delivered a surge of extra resources and specialist officers to a different district within Greater Manchester each month.

In response to a Member's question about work to address gender-based violence, Baroness Hughes informed Members about the first Board meeting which had recently taken place and the planning that was underway on how the strategy would be implemented and progress monitored. She informed Members that this was a multi-agency Board, including people with lived experience of gender-based violence. In response to a Member's question about the police's frontline response to domestic abuse and other gender-based violence, she acknowledged that, based on a review which had taken place, there were some concerning attitudes and behaviours from some police officers and, following this review, a training programme, Domestic Abuse Matters, was being rolled out to all responding officers.

Baroness Hughes advised the Committee that tackling car crime and burglaries linked in directly with the commitment to rebuild neighbourhood policing which had been referred to earlier. She advised that there was now a commitment for police to attend every burglary and robbery in person and that, since this pledge had been made, police had attended 92% of burglaries in person, which was a significant change from the previous situation. She reported that most car thefts were organised by criminal gangs so this needed to be addressed at a number of different levels. In response to a Member's question, she advised that more civilian staff would be recruited to enable police officers who were doing those roles to get back to policing.

In response to a Member's question, Baroness Hughes advised that police School Engagement Officers were not about criminalising young people but about building relationships. She reported that there had been a lot of engagement with schools, pupils and parents about this and that they were only in schools if the school wanted that. She agreed with the Member's point about the need to recruit more officers from under-represented groups and drew Members' attention to GMP's Race Equality Report, advising that the Chief Constable was very involved in and committed to this work. In response to a Member's question about road safety, she

advised that the new Deputy Chief Constable had a track record of developing road safety work and was developing a strategy on this for GMP.

Decision

To thank the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester for attending.

CESC/22/3 Proposed Public Spaces Protection Order - restricting alcohol consumption in public places

The Committee received a report of the Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety and the Community Safety Lead, Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety which provided information about the outcome of the statutory consultation regarding the potential introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to restrict the consumption of alcohol in public places and proposed the introduction of a new PSPO.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Background information;
- Early engagement;
- The statutory PSPO consultation and the responses;
- Equality Impact Assessment and the European Convention on Human Rights;
- Risk of displacement;
- The proposed PSPO;
- Enforcement; and
- Next steps.

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

- Would there be resources available to enforce the PSPO;
- That communication with the public needed to make it clear that this was not a ban on drinking alcohol in public places;
- Was this PSPO necessary and proportionate, given the laws that were already in place on being drunk and disorderly and on anti-social behaviour;
- How effective had previous PSPOs been;
- Concern about the wording in the survey and the timing of it during the pandemic when pubs were not open and people's experience of street drinking was not typical of what it would have been in normal circumstances; and
- Some Members stating their support for additional powers to address anti-social behaviour and make communities a better place to live, including a suggestion that in some areas officers should work with local bars.

The Community Safety Lead informed Members that PSPOs like this had been in place in some parts of the city previously but that these had expired and, that rather than just consulting on extending the existing PSPOs, a decision had been made to consult with residents across the city on whether this would be useful in other areas too. She advised that engagement and enforcement action in relation to the PSPOs

would be targeted, based upon reports of anti-social behaviour, rather than widespread action against anyone who was street drinking and that, where these PSPOs had been in force previously, the police had been able to enforce this within their existing resources. She recognised that communication was key, including making the public aware that this was something that would be enforced to address anti-social behaviour, rather than being used routinely. She advised that the existing PSPO in the city centre had been enforced proportionately to tackle problems in particular areas and that a similar approach would be taken if the proposed PSPO was introduced. The Head of Compliance Enforcement and Community Safety reported that this work would include engaging with people who were street drinking and referring them to support services, where appropriate. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods advised that this proposal took into account historical concerns about street drinking, citing examples from his ward, not just concerns raised during the pandemic.

The Community Safety Lead advised that this was an additional power that could be used to address anti-social behaviour with a focus on engaging with people to get them to comply rather than on issuing penalties. She reported that both Council and police officers would use discretion on what tools to use in a particular case, that a breach of the PSPO would only occur if someone refused to surrender their alcohol when asked to do so and that the response could be a warning, a referral to an appropriate agency or a fixed penalty notice and prosecution if appropriate. She advised that officers believed that the statutory threshold for introducing this PSPO had been met. She advised that there was not much national data available on the effectiveness of PSPOs but that Manchester had seen some impact from PSPOs and they were seen as a useful tool. She agreed to take forward a Member's comments about the importance of clarity in the signage relating to the PSPO. In response to a Member's question, she advised that introducing this across the whole city rather than in specific areas reduced the risk of PSPOs just moving the problem elsewhere.

Noting that the report recommended that the Committee endorse the proposed decision to make a City Wide PSPO to restrict alcohol consumption in a public place, a Member asked that it be made clear that the Committee endorsed this specifically as a tool to address anti-social behaviour, rather than drinking in public places more broadly.

Decision

To endorse the proposed decision to make a City Wide PSPO to restrict alcohol consumption in a public place, specifically as a tool to address anti-social behaviour, and that this should be made clear in signage and communication with the public.

CESC/22/4 Climate Change - Events

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which provided an overview of the current City Council approach to help to address the environmental impact of events in the city, acknowledge the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and what future measures the Council could implement to influence sectoral change and further minimise the carbon footprint of these events.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Background contextual information;
- Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25;
- Sustainable event guides;
- Single use plastics;
- Temporary power: reducing the need for generators;
- Engagement of suppliers; and
- Next steps.

The Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee praised the work taking place but advised that more should be done in relation to smaller, community events and that the link between the Events Team and Parks Team should be improved. She reported that more should be done to address the rubbish left after these community events and cross-contamination of different types of waste. She asked whether any workshops could be provided to local community groups to help them to understand what should be done.

The Head of Event Development advised that he would look into work with Parks and what additional measures could be put in place in relation to smaller, community events. He reported that workshops were being arranged for events funded through the Community Events Fund and that he would look into whether this could be expanded to cover groups whose events did not fall into this category. In response to a Member's question, he advised that his team were involved in the festive markets and a number of specialist markets and that he would look at what more could be done in relation to these.

The Executive Member for the Environment informed the Committee that discussions were taking place with the Head of Neighbourhoods about how learning from community events could be embedded into smaller events in neighbourhoods, focusing on reducing waste.

In response to a Member's question about the use of plastic bottles at the Manchester Marathon, the Head of Parks, Leisure, Events and Youth acknowledged that this was an issue and advised that his service was working with the organisers to develop a plan to address this. He reported that the initial focus of work to address the environmental impact of events had been on the larger events but that the Events and Parks Teams were working to ensure that the learning from these events would be shared and embedded more widely to also reduce the impact of smaller events. In response to a Member's question, he confirmed that Friends Groups would be involved in this work. In response to a question about the use of generators for events, he highlighted the information in the report about work to reduce the need for generators.

Decision

To note the report.

CESC/22/5 Climate Change - Leisure Estate

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which described the work that had been undertaken over the last three years to retrofit and improve the sustainability of the Council's leisure estate. This contributed to the decarbonisation of Manchester City Council's operational estate and more generally to the climate change emergency. The report outlined the Carbon Reduction Programme (CRP) that was underway to deliver energy efficiency and carbon reduction measures across the estate.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Current emissions;
- Carbon Reduction Programme;
- Leisure operator measures;
- Impact of carbon reduction measures; and
- Next steps.

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

- To welcome the progress being made and that these achievements should be promoted;
- Improving the sustainability of 3G pitches through using cork infill instead of rubber crumb; and
- The impact of people travelling to leisure facilities.

A Member reported that at the Committee's July 2021 meeting, the Committee had asked officers to look into how leisure centre users could be discouraged from using single-use plastic bottles as well as the use of paper towels to wipe down equipment between users and he asked what progress had been made. The Head of Parks, Leisure, Events and Youth informed Members that these issues had been raised with the leisure operators, who had been asked to focus on addressing these issues. He advised that progress was being monitored on a quarterly basis on the use of consumable items in leisure centres and he suggested that the Committee receive a report on recycling in 12 months' time. In response to the question about playing pitches, he advised that Manchester was leading the way in experimenting with the use of cork infill instead of rubber crumb on the pitches that were planned for Hough End but that at this stage the longevity of and the maintenance required for this type of pitch was not known. He agreed that it was important to look at sustainable solutions for pitches and advised that, if cork infill proved to be a reasonable solution, the Council would look at using it elsewhere within the city. He informed Members that the Council's Leisure Strategy set out an aim that all residents should live within 20 minutes' public transport or walk time of a leisure facility and that decisions on the location of new leisure facilities had been made on this basis, supporting the shift towards more people using public transport instead of cars. He advised that the Leisure Strategy was being refreshed, taking into account the Council's declaration of the Climate Emergency. The Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee advised that the leisure operators should promote the use of public transport or active travel to access their facilities and that work should also take place with Transport for Greater Manchester on this.

The Executive Member for the Environment supported Members' comments about promoting the achievements made in improving the sustainability of the leisure estate. She also agreed that, as public buildings regularly visited by many Manchester residents, leisure centres should be used to encourage, inform and support residents in behaviour change.

Decision

To note the report.

CESC/22/6 Overview Report

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained a list of key decisions yet to be taken within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

A Member requested an update report on the City Centre PSPO which had been introduced in 2020, to which the Chair agreed.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme, subject to the above amendment.