

Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 17 July 2019

Present:

Councillor Igbon (Chair) – in the Chair
Councillors Azra Ali, Appleby, Butt, Flanagan, Jeavons, Kilpatrick, Lynch, Razaq, Sadler, Whiston, White and Wright

Also present:

Councillor S Murphy, Deputy Leader
Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods
Councillor Stogia, Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport
Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children and Schools
Councillor Midgley, Assistant Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration
Jonny Sadler, Programme Director Manchester Climate Change Agency
Chris Paul, Citizen of Manchester
Callum, Citizen of Manchester, Climate Emergency Manchester
Louise Sheridan, Bentley House Estate Tenant and Resident Association

Apologies: Councillor Harland, Hassan, Hughes and Lyons

NESC/19/7 Urgent Business

The Chair introduced the highways improvements to Great Ancoats Street as an item of urgent business, stating that she had been approached by a number of Members and concerned residents regarding the scheme and the provision of cycle lanes within the design.

Chris Paul addressed the Committee and stated that in his view the scheme was not in keeping with the Our Manchester Approach and was contrary to existing policies regarding emission reductions, climate change, health and the promotion of alternative transport. He stated that he felt that the design was constructed around the need of car users and was not logical. He stated that other countries had successfully delivered cycling schemes in consultation with communities and all road users and provided examples of where this had been achieved. He stated that he believed that the consultation had been unsatisfactory and more citizen involvement and participation in the design of such schemes was required.

The Committee then heard from Callum, Climate Emergency Manchester. He said that the scheme would maintain the current levels of car use and was not appropriate and contrary to the Climate Emergency that had been recently adopted by Council.

A Member commented that he welcomed the spend and investment in the highways and the improvements to the footpaths, green planting and road crossings that had been included in the design, however he expressed concern on the level of consultation with local residents.

A Member commented that the scheme should be reviewed in light of the Climate Emergency that had been adopted by Council at their meeting of 10 July 2019. The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport responded by stating that she recognised that people did care about safe cycling and made reference to the significant investment of new cycling infrastructure across the city and in particular in the area itself. She commented that the scheme had started to be delivered, stating that Great Ancoats was an extremely busy route and the scheme would deliver twelve new safer crossings for pedestrians and cyclists and deliver an improved and safer connectivity to the city centre for residents in Ancoats. In addition, the scheme would deliver physical improvements, such as wider pavements, tree planting and reduced noise from vehicles as a result of new materials used in the highway.

She stated that the existing cycle lane was a line of paint 250m long and inefficient and the two parallel cycle corridors was an enhanced offer to cyclists. She also said that Great Ancoats Street is not on the Bee Network map.

In regard to the issue of consultations she stated that she always sought opportunities to review and improve how these were delivered, commenting on the recent consultation exercise in relation to the Chorlton cycle route where additional events had been facilitated, walkabouts with Councillors and businesses organised and the consultation period extended.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Operations Highways confirmed that the funding deadlines or alternative funding did not influence the final design and the scheme would be completed by February 2021.

The Chair commented that the Our Manchester approach needed to be applied to all consultations with local residents and ward Members involved. In response to Members comments regarding the need to ensure that similar large scale schemes were subject to scrutiny at an earlier stage to allow Members to adequately scrutinise proposals, the Chair said she would look into how this could be scheduled into the Committee's work programme.

A Member commented that he did not want to block the development as there were a number of positive proposals within the scheme. He recommended that a consultation exercise on the scheme be undertaken over the summer period that included a number of drop in events organised for local residents, businesses, cycle users and local Members, and that any recommendations from local Members following the consultation exercise should then be relayed to the Chair of the Committee, and as long as the Chair was satisfied that the consultation had taken place the Committee should accept her recommendations.

The Chair stated that the Committee could not put the development on hold as it was not a decision for the Committee and she supported the recommendation proposed by the Member, noting that it would be an opportunity to provide information to the public.

Decision

To recommend that a consultation exercise on the scheme be undertaken over the summer period that included a number of drop in events organised for local residents, businesses, cycle users and local Members, and that any recommendations from local Members following the consultation exercise should then be relayed to the Chair of the Committee, and as long as the Chair was satisfied that the consultation had taken place the Committee should accept her recommendations.

NESC/19/8 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2019 were submitted for approval as an accurate record of the meeting. Councillor Razaq requested that his apologies be recorded.

Decisions

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2019 as a correct record subject to the above amendment.

NESC/19/9 Manchester Climate Change Annual Progress Report

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Lead Policy and Partnerships Head of Local Planning and Infrastructure and the Manchester Climate Change Agency that provided an update on the progress that had been made towards the delivery of the existing 2020 targets for the City of Manchester as a whole and Manchester City Council.

The Strategic Lead Policy and Strategy referred to the main points and themes within the report which included: -

- An update on the activity which was underway to develop new plans to ensure progress towards the new zero carbon 2038 targets;
- Information on the activity of the Manchester Climate Change Agency;
- An update on citywide progress to date, noting that to date the city has achieved a 5% reduction in carbon emissions since 2017, versus the 13% target;
- An update on Manchester City Council's emissions noting that the Council had committed to reducing its direct carbon emissions by 41% by 2019/2020 from a 2009/10 baseline;
- Data for the 2018/19 financial year showed that the Council's direct emissions had reduced by 48.1% since the 2009/10 baseline meaning that the 41% target had been achieved and surpassed a year ahead of schedule; and
- New plans for the Council and the City would be published in March 2020, noting that the Council would need to play a critical role in supporting the city as a whole to reach its zero carbon ambitions through a variety of roles and responsibilities.

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

- Noting the importance of this issue and recognising that the Council had declared a climate emergency;

- Would Council plans and policies be reviewed to take into consideration the Climate Emergency motion;
- Noting that some reductions could be attributed to external factors that had been imposed on the Council as a result of budget cuts; such as the loss of staff and subsequent building closures;
- Why was crowd funding used to finance the Youth Board within Manchester Climate Agency;
- Aviation emissions could not be ignored and more needed to be done to encourage journeys to and from the airport via public transport;
- More alternative transport should be provided across the city, noting that the tram service did not cover all of the city;
- An explanation was sought as to the reported Red, Amber and Green ratings;
- The Committee should establish a Subgroup to consider the issue of Climate Change on a regular basis in addition to regular reports to the Committee;
- The importance of engaging local residents in this agenda and to support this all Neighbourhood Officers should receive carbon literacy training as soon as possible; and
- The need to engage the business sector in this important area of work to deliver the ambitious targets.

The Strategic Lead Policy and Strategy said that policies and the plan would be reviewed in consideration of the recent Council motion including procurement policy. In regard to the Red, Amber and Green ratings that were referred to in Appendix 3 of the report, he said that these were officer decisions at present and a new action plan would be developed. He further stated in response to a question from a Member that the vehicles used by Biffa were emission compliant and the options for using electric vehicles were already being explored. Noting the comment from the Committee regarding the carbon emissions saved by buildings, he said that he acknowledged the impact of external factors such as national emissions factors, budget reductions and rationalisation of the Council's estate, however other factors, such as the refitting of Moss Side Leisure Centre had realised emissions savings. He further stated that discussions were currently ongoing with the HROD department to explore options for delivering the carbon literacy training to priority staff groups.

Mr Sadler commented that the funding and financial balance that the Member referred to was EU funding provided to the Agency as 'pre-financing', in advance of the delivery of activities over the five-years of the project. He added that the Manchester Climate Change Youth Board had proven to be successful in starting to reach and connect with young people across the city, and representing their views to decision-makers. However, that their capacity was limited and that the decision had been made to raise funding for a designated Youth Climate Action Champion. Fund raising was currently underway. Regarding Manchester's climate change targets he stated that the adoption of a carbon budget for the City that had been independently set by experts in the field of climate change was an important development, noting that the carbon budget of 15 million tonnes CO₂ for 2018-2100 was limited and could not be exceeded. He added that framing Manchester's climate change targets as a limited budget was more helpful than focusing on the end-date for achieving zero carbon. He stated that all citizens, organisations and partners were important to achieving this goal and invited all Members to lead on this within their communities and neighbourhoods to facilitate change and challenge. He set out that the Agency

were looking to engage with residents and organisations during 2019 to a) set out what Manchester needs to do to meet its targets b) to understand the work that is already underway and c) to understand the additional support that residents and organisations need to enable them to act.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport commented that all citizens, businesses, schools, were collectively responsible for delivering this work as the Council alone could not deliver this, adding that the Council accounted for approximately 2% of the city's overall carbon footprint for the city as a whole. She acknowledged that the Airport was an important issue, stating that all ground services at Manchester Airport were carbon neutral. She said that the Council would continue to seek to influence and challenge the aviation industry and lobby national government regarding aviation emissions and would also work with the Tyndall Centre to understand the emissions from the airport as a percentage of the overall carbon budget for Manchester. She commented that whilst this was an important area of work it was important to recognise that aviation emissions nationally accounted for 2% of overall emissions.

The Chair stated that she supported the recommendation proposed by a Member to establish a Subgroup of the Committee to review and monitor the work related to Climate Change. She informed the Committee that she would consult with the Members to consider the best options for progressing this and report back to the Committee.

Decision

1. The Committee recommend that a Subgroup of the Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee be established to review and monitor the work related to Climate Change.
2. The Committee recommend that the Chair of the Committee consult with the Member proposing the Subgroup to consider the best options for progressing this and report back to the Committee.

NESC/19/10 Mandatory HMO Licensing update

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods that provided information on the approach taken to deliver the extension to mandatory licensing nine months after the scheme had been implemented.

The Strategic Lead, Community Safety, Compliance and Enforcement referred to the main points and themes within the report which included: -

- Providing a background to Mandatory Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing, noting that in 2018 legislation was amended and now required properties let to 5 or more people from 2 or more households who share amenities (kitchens and bathrooms) to be licensed by the local authority;
- Information on the work to identify Licensable HMO properties;
- Engagement with Landlords;

- The impact of Landlord Licensing, noting that Pre-licensing inspections were carried out before a licence was issued and compliance inspections were then undertaken during the course of the licence to determine whether the conditions of the licence were continuing to be adhered to; and
- Noting that the Housing Compliance and Enforcement Team were working closely with Strategic Housing and the Executive Member for Housing to refresh the Private Rented Sector Strategy.

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

- Were there any intentions to extend Selective Licensing to other areas of the city;
- Were temporary accommodation properties that were HMO's inspected and subject to the same conditions;
- What was being done to improve the number of properties identified as HMO's, noting the number of visits undertaken compared to the numbers identified;
- Had the benefits that Selective Licensing was intended to bring to neighbourhoods been realised;
- How could residents report a suspected HMO; and
- Could the number of licensed HMO's be provided by ward.

The Strategic Lead, Community Safety, Compliance and Enforcement commented that a further, detailed report on Selective Licensing was scheduled for consideration by the Committee at their February meeting. She advised that this report would include the detailed specific information that had been requested, however she commented that initial observations from the Crumpsall pilot, which has been running the longest, were that the Selective Licensing scheme appears to have been successful with positive feedback from residents, the local neighbourhood team and Members, noting however that Selective Licensing is only one aspect of neighbourhood management. She advised that consideration would be given as to where any future focused schemes would be implemented.

The Strategic Lead, Community Safety, Compliance and Enforcement stated that information on the number of all licensed HMO properties was available and would be circulated to Members.

The Neighbourhood Manager, Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Housing informed the Committee that where temporary accommodation properties met the criteria for licensing as an HMO they were subject to HMO conditions and property inspections were done.

She stated that the initial exercise to identify properties that are now required to be licensed as HMOs had been done using desk top information which was available at the time. The intention is now to focus more on local intelligence and knowledge from a wider range of sources. A Member commented that there was a useful tool on the Council's website that allowed residents to check if a property had a licence and report any suspected non licensed properties.

The Neighbourhood Manager, Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Housing further advised that all HMO properties were inspected prior to a licence being issued and periodic inspections were carried out throughout the life of the

licence period. She commented that if there were any concerns a licence could be granted for a lesser period than five years, however the cost of the licence remained the same.

Decision

To note the report.

NESC/19/11 Update on work to tackle counterfeit activity and environmental issues in the Strangeways area

The Chair recommended that this item of business be deferred to the December meeting.

Decision

To defer this item of business to the meeting of 4 December 2019.

NESC/19/12 Update on Homelessness and Housing

(Cllr Flanagan in the Chair)

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Adult Services and The Strategic Director, Development that provided an update, subsequent to the report to Neighbourhoods and Scrutiny on the 6 March 2019, on the work that was taking place to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the City. This includes the work being progressed on helping the number of people sleeping rough access accommodation and support, emergency accommodation and temporary accommodation.

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

- Noting that across Manchester an increasing number of individuals and families were becoming homeless and were at greater risk of homelessness;
- The main reason for statutory homelessness was the loss of a tenancy in the private rented sector which had become the number one cause above domestic abuse;
- An update on the work that had been progressed to help those who were sleeping rough in the city;
- Describing the work undertaken to improve standards in temporary accommodation; and
- Describing the work that was progressing to prevent people from becoming homeless.

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

- Recognising that the increase in homelessness and rough sleeping was a direct result of austerity and welfare reform;

- Noting the report detailed a variety of positive work to respond to homeless people and rough sleepers;
- Was the reported funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) which would fund a Navigator Service for 12 months be used to support rough sleepers;
- When was the Navigator Service due to commence;
- What work was being done to support people who were victims of domestic violence;
- Welcoming the tailored Psychologically Informed Environment at Women's Direct Access;
- Was there a breakdown by characteristic of the number of presentations to the homelessness service due to domestic violence;
- What work was being undertaken across services to support families, especially those in dispersed accommodation;
- Noting that over the winter period to 18 March 2019, Manchester had 529 unique individuals referred to it through A Bed Every Night, and accommodated 377 unique individuals, what happened to the other 152 that were not accommodated;
- What support was offered to people who had been made homeless from the Private Rented Sector (PRS) and their only viable housing option would be to be to return to accommodation in the PRS;
- Noting the importance of prevention work, where would the two pilot schemes be delivered;
- Housing Act legislation should be used during inspections of temporary accommodation rather than Environmental Health Act powers;
- Could the audit report of temporary accommodation policies, procedures and provisions of support to families be shared with the Committee;
- The importance of humanising rough sleepers; and
- Did the Task and Targeting Group record equality data.

The Deputy Leader stated that there was a lot of work done to support the victims of domestic violence, however she stated that there was still more to be done and this was continually reviewed. She described that the Sanctuary Scheme had been developed to enable victims of domestic violence to remain living safely in their home via the installation of number of safety measures such as panic alarms. She described that work was also undertaken with perpetrators of domestic violence to address their offending behaviour through the Talk, Listen, Change service. She informed the Committee that the tendering of domestic violence service, that included specific services for BAME victims had been reported to the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee. She further confirmed that breakdown by characteristic of the number of presentations to the homelessness service due to domestic violence was recorded and would be shared with the Committee. She further stated that the project that was being progressed by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA), Mental Health and the Homelessness service for a psychologist to be placed at the Women's Direct Access Centre for a period of 2 year was specifically tailored to meet the often complex needs of the women accessing that service.

The Deputy Leader stated that the single most effective action the Government could take would be to review the Local Housing Allowance rates, adding that Manchester

had submitted evidence as part of the Local Governments Association campaign around this issue.

The Executive Member for Children and Schools informed the Committee of the work being delivered to support families and children who were homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of domestic violence. He invited the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services to inform the Committee of the work of the strength based, Safer Together service that he stated had received a positive reception.

The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services described how this service was designed to improve practice and how services worked together with families where there was domestic abuse and concerns about children. It helped workers to partner with domestic abuse victims and engage with people who had committed domestic abuse to enhance the safety and wellbeing of children. He stated that Greater Manchester Police had collocated to work with Social Work teams to identify and intervene at an earlier stage if any concerns regarding domestic abuse were evident. He further described that Operation Compass alerted schools of any concerns so that the appropriate support could be offered to the child.

The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services further advised the Committee that bus passes were offered to enable children to travel to schools if placed in temporary displaced accommodation, however it was recognised how disruptive and detrimental this could be to a families and child's social and support network.

The Executive Member for Children and Schools described the importance of recognising the impact that homelessness and the threat of homelessness had on families and children. He reported that a third of all families that came into contact with the Early Help Teams experienced this and they worked to support them, worked with landlords and sign posted them to the most appropriate sources of support.

The Assistant Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration informed the Committee that she would be reviewing how a range of services worked together to deliver the best outcomes for people who were homeless or were at risk of becoming homeless. She said she had undertaken a number of visits to meet with teams and people accessing services to help identify where any gaps in service existed. She paid tribute to the hard work and commitment of the staff in the Floating Support Service.

The Director of Homelessness informed the Committee the difference in the numbers reported as being referred through A Bed Every Night and not accommodated could be explained because individuals refused accommodation or moved out of Manchester. In response to homeless people being rehoused within the PRS he stated that support staff would work with individuals to ensure any potential property was affordable and of good quality. He stated that the intention was to have the Navigator Service commence as soon as possible and that the two pilot areas for the prevention service were to be announced shortly and these would be based on the prevalence of PRS accommodation and prevalence of welfare reform, stating that

use of prevention methods with teams working at a neighbourhood level was important to reduce the numbers of people presenting as homeless and he made reference to the success of the Section 21 team in challenging notices that had been served on tenants. He further acknowledged the comment from the Member regarding the importance of humanising rough sleepers.

In response to the specific questions relating the Audit report and the Housing Act he advised that he would look into this before responding.

The Chair commented that he welcomed the report and the level of information provided. He stated that the Committee were of the opinion that the increase in homelessness and rough sleeping witnessed across Manchester was as a direct result of austerity and welfare reform and the Committee recognised the commitment from the Executive Members and officers to respond to this challenging issue.

The Chair recommended that a progress report be provided for consideration at the November meeting, and that the report included information about the levels of support offered to ex-service personnel accessing A Bed Every Night and the work with charitable organisations to sign post and support ex-service personnel. He further recommended that the Deputy Lord Mayor be invited to attend the meeting.

Decision

1. To recommended that a progress report be provided for consideration at the November meeting, and that the report included information about the levels of support offered to ex-service personnel accessing A Bed Every Night and the work with charitable organisations to sign post and support ex-service personnel.

2. To recommended that Councillor T. Judge, Deputy Lord Mayor be invited to attend the November meeting.

[Councillor Igbon declared a prejudicial interest and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item and 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/19/13 Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy - The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods that provided an overview of work undertaken, and progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the Our Manchester strategy for those areas within the respective Executive Member's portfolio.

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

- The need to raise the standards of private hire taxis and hackney carriage drivers across all boroughs to ensure they met the same high standards as required in Manchester;
- Taxi Licensing conditions should be standardised across Greater Manchester;

- The need to lobby central government to ensure adequate subsidies were available to enable taxi drivers to scrap, upgrade or retrofit their vehicles if a Clean Air Zone was introduced;
- Welcoming the improved rates of recycling in apartment blocks, noting that Committee had provided a challenge to the Executive Member on this issue.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods stated that he valued the taxi trade commenting that they were responsible for public safety. He stated that Manchester was proud of the high standards required by the trade and noted that the deregulation of the trade had regrettably allowed operators licensed by other authorities with less rigorous standards to enter Manchester to ply their trade. He stated that work was ongoing at a GM level to consider this and to drive up standards across the boroughs.

In response to the implementation of any Clean Air Zone he said lobbying of Government would continue to ensure that adequate funding was available to both the taxi trade and other effected business to ensure they paid for an adequate scrappage scheme.

The Executive Member welcomed the comment regarding the increased rates of recycling and stated that thanks needed to be sent to all the officers, teams and operatives who had worked very hard, and continued to work hard in often challenging circumstances to deliver services on behalf of the residents of Manchester.

Decision

To note the report.

NESC/19/14 Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy - The Executive Member for Environment, Planning & Transport

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Member for the Environment, Planning and Transport that provided an overview of work undertaken, and progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the Our Manchester strategy for those areas within the respective Executive Member's portfolio.

Louise Sheridan, Bentley House Estate Tenant and Resident Association addressed the Committee and raised specific issues in relation to the Princess Road /Medlock Street development. The Executive Member said she would respond to the resident and the Ward Member on the issues raised outside of the meeting.

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

- Acknowledging the scale and challenge of the portfolio held;
- The frustration experienced in escalating highways issues; and
- Noting that the flow of traffic across the city was important for a successful economy.

The Chair informed the Committee that a new CRM system was due to be launched that should hopefully address the issue raised regarding escalating highways issues and that she would continue to work with Cllr Stogia to resolve any issues.

The Executive Member said that she enjoyed her role immensely and the challenge it presented and that she remained committed to delivering the best services on behalf of the residents of Manchester. She paid tribute to the hard work and commitment of her officers in delivering this work.

Decision

To note the report.

NESC/19/15 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.

Decision

The Committee notes the report and approves the work programme.