

# **Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2019**

### **Present:**

Councillor Igbon – in the Chair

Councillors Appleby, Flanagan, Harland, Hassan, Hughes, Jeavons, Kilpatrick, Noor, Reid, Sadler, White and Wright

Councillor S Murphy, Deputy Leader

Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

Councillor Stogia, Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport

Councillor Richards, Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration

Councillor Midgley, Ward Councillor for Chorlton Park

Councillor Shilton Godwin, Ward Councillor for Chorlton Park

Councillor A Simcock, Ward Councillor for Didsbury East

Peter Boulton, Head of Highways, Transport for Greater Manchester

**Apologies:** Councillors Azra Ali, Chohan, Hewitson, Lyons

### **NESC/19/07 Sara Todd and Fiona Worrall**

In recognition that Sara Todd would be leaving Manchester City Council to take up the position of Chief Executive at Trafford Council, the Chair expressed thanks and appreciation on behalf of the residents of Manchester for all her dedication and hard work over the years and wished her every success in her new role.

The Committee also noted that Fiona Worrall had recently celebrated her thirty year anniversary of working for Manchester City Council. Members congratulated Fiona on this achievement and thanked her for her continued hard work and the support that she had offered the Committee.

### **NESC/19/08 Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2019 as a correct record.

### **NESC/19/09 Updated Financial Strategy and Directorate Business Plan 2019/20**

Further to item NESC/18/52 the Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive and the City Treasurer that provided an update on the Council's financial position and set out next steps in the budget process, including scrutiny of the draft budget proposals and Directorate Business Plan reports by this Committee.

The Committee was invited to consider and make recommendations to the Executive on the budget proposals which were within the remit of this Committee and to comment on the Directorate Business Plans which had been designed to ensure the Council invested in the services that were valued by its residents, achieving both high quality services and outcomes for residents as well as a balanced budget.

The Committee considered in turn the Neighbourhoods Budget and Business Plan, the Strategic Development Budget and Business Plan and the Homelessness Budget and Business Plan.

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

- Noting that despite continued austerity and years of unfair funding settlements the Council had remained committed to supporting the most vulnerable residents, and acknowledging that investments had been made in services to improve the lives of Manchester residents;
- Support was expressed for the call to regulate bus services across Manchester, noting that areas of the city were underserved and this had an impact on residents' opportunities to access jobs and engage in the city's cultural offer;
- An explanation was sought regarding the highways budget underspend;
- More needed to be done to tackle rogue landlords, noting that vulnerable tenants were often housed in premises that were not suitable;
- Was there an intention to extend the Selective Licensing Scheme for private landlords;
- Supporting the stated commitment given to building social and affordable housing, adding that this needed to be provided across the city;
- Was the funding for homelessness services sustainable in future years;
- Had there been an investment in staff within the homelessness teams to deal with the increased demand on this service;
- Consideration needed to be given to developing a policy to stop placing homeless families into hotels;
- Noting the programme to purchase houses to accommodate homeless families where would these properties be located and would those families be offered support;
- Noting the costs associated with homelessness it was important to acknowledge the wider additional costs to a range of services, including Children's and Health services, that resulted from homelessness;
- Was the number of asylum seekers placed in Manchester known and was the accommodation that they were provided with checked to ensure it was safe;
- Welcoming the support offered to the Lord Mayor's Homelessness Charity by Vincent Kompany whose testimonial dinner had raised £216K for good causes;
- Clarification was sought as to where the proposed additional investment of £0.5m identified within the Neighbourhoods Directorate Business Planning: 2019-20 would be spent and how the impact of this investment would be measured;
- What was the cost to the Council of removing fly tipping;
- Consideration should be given to introducing CCTV at household waste and recycling centres to monitor vehicles and help identify fly tippers;
- Consideration needed to be given to domestic bin sizes to support residents to dispose of their waste appropriately and encourage recycling; and

- The bulky waste collection service needed to be promoted amongst residents, such as applying information stickers on bins.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport said that the budget proposals demonstrated that Manchester City Council was trying to mitigate the continued cuts to public services that had been experienced worst by Labour run authorities. She described that the city was growing with resulting demands on services, however funding had been reduced year on year. She described that the Council had listened to the views of residents throughout previous years' budget consultation exercises and had striven to keep neighbourhoods clean and invested in repairing the highways network, acknowledging the point raised regarding the importance of having a safe and reliable road network for all users. She explained the reasons for the Highways underspend in previous years and how this had been reprogrammed to deliver the programme of works.

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 that work was being developed to establish an enforcement team specifically for the Private Rented Sector, stating that they had issued over £1/4m 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.

The Deputy Leader responded to the comments regarding the Homelessness Budget paper and commented that the increased rates of homelessness and rough sleeping was a societal issue and the impact of continued welfare reform and that the introduction of Universal Credit had had a significant impact. She said that the budget proposed was designed to protect and invest in services for the most vulnerable people in the city. She said there was a move away from housing families in hotels and work was ongoing to improve temporary accommodation.

The Deputy Leader commented that the intention was to buy houses that were suitable for families and these would be bought where they were available. She said that support was available for families who were homeless and support would be provided as they moved into those properties. In response to the comments raised regarding a further breakdown of the homelessness budget she said this would be provided to the Committee. The Head of Finance commented that there were elements of the homelessness budget that were non-recurring.

The Strategic Lead for Homelessness said that in response to the increase in the number of people presenting as homeless the number of staff at the 'front door' had been increased to deal with the demand. She said that work was underway to deliver

this service in other locations, including developing options with the Local Care Organisation. She described that work was being progressed to increase homelessness prevention, this included a team to deal with Section 21 eviction notices and intervening on behalf of residents and working with Private Landlords to prevent evictions. In response to the question regarding asylum seekers she advised that there was a process in place whereby the location of properties was approved and Manchester was not above the 1:200 limit.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods stated that flytipping was increasingly associated with commercial waste and criminality and consideration was being given as to how interventions, such as CCTV and installing physical barriers could be implemented to address this. He said Manchester remained committed to identifying and prosecuting those responsible for flytipping, commenting that Manchester had been responsible for 10% of all prosecutions nationally.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said that work would commence to review the size of different bins in passageways to ensure they were sufficient and to promote recycling. He further commented that he would circulate the cost of removing flytipping to the Committee.

In regard to the comments made about the bulky waste collection service the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods stated that a way of maximising the benefits of this would be for residents to 'pool' their allowance, noting that apartment blocks have one free collection allocated per apartment and consideration would be given to how this service could be further promoted amongst residents.

## **Decision**

The Committee;

1. Note the reports and recommend that the comments of the Committee are submitted to the 13 February 2019 meeting of Executive for consideration.
2. Request that the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods provide the Committee with a breakdown of where the proposed additional investment of £0.5m described in the Neighbourhoods Directorate Business Planning: 2019-20 would be spent and how the impact of this investment would be measured;
3. Request that the Deputy Leader provide a further breakdown of the Homelessness Budget.

[Councillor Appleby declared a personal and non prejudicial interest as her partner is employed by Biffa and Councillor Hughes declared a personal and non prejudicial interest as he is employed as a bus driver.]

**NESC/19/10**

**Action to address non-compliance in premises allowing shisha smoking**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Operating Officer, Neighbourhoods that provided an update on the work being carried out to address the issues of non-compliance in shisha cafes across the city.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods referred to the main points and themes within the report which included: -

- The legislative background and health background to tackling smoking, noting that Manchester had the highest premature mortality rates in the country for the three major smoking related conditions: lung cancer, heart disease and stroke;
- Describing the joint approach of the Population Health and Wellbeing Team and the Licensing and Out of Hours teams to address the breaches of the Health Act in some shisha premises, as well as the risks of smoking shisha generally;
- Information on the number of shisha premises per ward;
- Describing shisha smoking in the context of the premises licensing regime and planning legislation;
- The issues and concerns associated with such premises that included health implications, tax avoidance, breaches of planning legislation and immigration offences;
- The multi agency response to these concerns including an update on the Shisha Task Group that provided a forum for partners to share intelligence about these premises and plan multi agency operations;
- Describing the work undertaken to raise public awareness of the health impacts of smoking shisha, noting that recent analysis showed that smoking rates are now highest in age groups under 25; and
- Information on the enforcement activities undertaken by the Licensing and Out of Hours Team that included the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices and prosecutions, accompanied by case studies.

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

- Information regarding the health implications of smoking shisha should be published in a variety of languages;
- Information was sought regarding the laws relating to shisha premises; and
- What was being done to protect under 18's who attend such premises.

The Head of Planning, Building Control and Licensing informed the Committee that a Premises License was not required as shisha bars generally did not offer any regulated entertainment activities, such as serving hot food after 11pm and/or selling alcohol. However, the Development Compliance Team did investigate alleged breaches of planning control, including, but not limited to, non-compliance with planning permissions, unauthorised operational development, material changes of use of land or buildings and the display of advertisements.

The Head of Planning, Building Control and Licensing advised that in addition to the above, a multi agency approach had been developed with such partners as Greater Manchester Police, The Fire Service and HM Revenue and Customs so that a range

of powers could be exercised to address issues found at such premises in a coordinated and targeted manner.

In response to the comments made regarding the need to safeguard young people the Strategic Lead Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety said that they did work closely with Children's Services and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to address any safeguarding concerns.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods described the significant health dangers associated with smoking shisha, stating that research studies had shown that smoking a shisha pipe for one hour was roughly equivalent to smoking one hundred cigarettes. He acknowledged the comment regarding the information leaflets being available in different languages, stating that this would be reviewed.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said that whilst smoking shisha was in itself not illegal, it was however very difficult due to the weather to operate such a business legally. He further commented that the approach taken to tackling shisha premises was widely supported by local communities and that action would be taken against any premises who tried to obstruct officers in carrying out their lawful duties.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

## **NESC/19/11            Scheme Review – Princess Road / Princess Parkway (Speed Limit Reduction)**

The Committee considered the report of the Operational Director of Highways that provided a review of the speed limit reduction scheme that had been implemented on the A5103 Princess Road and the impact on two adjacent roads (Alexandra Road South and Nell Lane). The speed limit along Princess Road was recently reduced from 40 mph down to 30mph, implemented on the 30 April 2017 via the introduction of a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO). This temporary order was put in place as a safety precaution while the permanent order was progressed.

The scheme was developed in response to public concerns around road safety, and in particular the safety of pedestrians crossing Princess Road. The severity of the concerns had been heightened by two fatal collisions involving pedestrians at the Darley Avenue crossing in December 2015 and December 2016.

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

- Providing a background and rationale for introducing the speed limit;
- Data on traffic counts for periods prior to the introduction of the limit and post introduction;
- Comparative collision data analysis;
- Comparative data of vehicle volume and speed;

- Noting that the reduction in speed limit on Princess Parkway / Road, appeared to have had a positive effect in reducing the severity of collisions, which would correlate with a reduction in the overall speed of vehicles; and
- Overall there was a small reduction in the average vehicle speeds on Princess Parkway / Road, but generally these are not significant.

The Committee then heard from three local ward Councillors who had been invited to share their views and experience following the speed limit change. The three Members stated that the introduction of the speed limit had been very positive for local residents and shared with the Committee the comments received from residents. These included the reduced noise levels, a safer environment for pedestrians and safer crossings. The Members thanked officers for delivering the scheme and suggested that more should be done to publicise enforcement activity and that Greater Manchester Police should support residents undertaking speed watches in their communities.

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

- Thanking those residents and ward Members who had been instrumental in campaigning for the reduction in the speed limit;
- Members of the Committee whose wards had been affected by the change welcomed the reduction in the speed limit;
- Was consideration been given to implementing similar speed restrictions on other arterial roads in Manchester;
- Members would welcome the introduction of speed restrictions on roads that led off Princess Road;
- Had any analysis been undertaken to understand the levels of traffic displacement following the introduction of the speed restriction;
- Expressing disappointment that Greater Manchester Police were not in attendance, noting that enforcement of this scheme was important;
- Members identified a number of locations along the route that they suggested may need to be reviewed to ensure they remained safe and requested that officers undertook this review; and
- Was this work coordinated with Highways England and neighbouring authorities.

The Director of Operations (Highways) welcomed the positive comments received regarding the scheme. He advised that nationally funding for such schemes had reduced however consideration would be given to prioritising future schemes and that the Committee would be informed as these plans developed.

The Head of City Wide Highways responded to questions stating that analysis of displaced traffic would continue and be reported in future update reports, and this analysis would inform the design of future schemes. He commented that officers were working with ward members and residents in Hulme to deliver further road safety improvements. He confirmed that the department did work with other neighbouring authorities and Highways England. In regard to speed cameras the Committee were informed that there were strict criteria that had to be met before these could be installed, however mobile cameras could be deployed. In response to the areas identified for further inspection by Members he gave an assurance that these would be investigated.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport informed the Committee that GMP had been invited to attend the meeting and contribute to the discussion, unfortunately however they had been unable to attend. She commented that she supported the call from Members for GMP to deliver targeted campaigns to address speeding and support residents organising speed watch campaigns.

## **Decision**

The Committee;

1. Welcome the reported road safety improvements along the Princess Road / Princess Parkway;
2. Recommend that the displacement of traffic continues to be monitored and analysis of this data is provided in a future update report;
3. Recommend that officers explore the options for establishing an online resource to enable residents to provide feedback on this scheme and any future scheme;
4. Recommends that officers in consultation with Greater Manchester Police install road safety cameras where appropriate to improve road safety; and
5. To request an update report in 12 months' time.

## **NESC/19/12            Highways and the flow of traffic across the city**

The Committee considered the presentation slide pack that had been submitted by Transport for Greater Manchester that described how traffic flow was managed and monitored through the city.

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

- Welcoming the continued development of the City, recognising that it demonstrated the success of the city, however noting that such development needed to be delivered in a managed and coordinated way so as to minimise disruption to residents;
- Consideration needed to be given as to how planned works were communicated to residents, noting that complaints arose when this failed to be done adequately and if appropriate a Task and Finish Group would be established, at an appropriate time to review this activity;
- Local residents needed to be involved at an early stage in discussions regarding planned works, noting that meetings with residents and developers had proven beneficial to minimise issues and prevented problems escalating;
- Major schemes, such as Hyde Road needed to involve neighbouring authorities to deliver this scheme with minimum disruption;
- Consideration needed to be given to suspending bus lanes to facilitate the flow of traffic;

- Legal advice should be obtained regarding Stopping Up Orders and the time limits contractors and developers were permitted to close the highway and a review of all Stopping Up Orders issued should be undertaken to establish if there had been any breaches of such orders;
- A minimum standard should be agreed for the provision of alternative footpaths during works, noting that alternative footpaths needed to be safe for all users and include the provision of lighting; and
- The Leader of the Council should be invited to any future meeting when this subject was discussed to explain how developments had been modelled; the timetable for the delivery of the various schemes; what assessment of traffic displacement had been undertaken and how this was to be managed to minimise disruption.

The Director of Operations (Highways) acknowledged the comments raised regarding the need to improve communications with residents regarding planned highway improvement work to minimise complaints from residents and local businesses. He advised that works are coordinated with TfGM and utilities companies to minimise disruption and programme meetings are regularly convened to manage larger schemes and events.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport acknowledged that disruption did occur during development and roadworks, noting that developments would always be accompanied by utilities works and to highlight the scale of this challenge to manage the disruption she reported that 86 permits are issued per day to contractors. In addition, she commented that in addition to planned works utilities companies also responded to emergency works.

## **Decision**

The Committee;

1. Recommend that legal advice is obtained in relation to Stopping Up Orders issued under provisions within the Town and Country Planning Act and the time limits contractors and developers are permitted to close the highway. Following this advice, a review of all Stopping Up Orders issued should be undertaken to establish if there had been any breaches of such orders;
2. Request that The Leader of the Council is invited to any future meeting when this subject is discussed to explain how developments had been modelled, the timetable for the delivery of the various schemes, what assessment of traffic displacement had been undertaken and how this was to be managed to minimise disruption;
3. To consider establishing a Task and Finish Group, at an appropriate time to consider the communications strategy for when planned major developments are to be delivered.

**NESC/19/13**

**Overview Report**

The report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which contained key decisions within the Committee's remit and responses to previous recommendations was submitted for comment. Members were also invited to agree the Committee's future work programme.

**Decisions**

The Committee notes the report and approve the work programme.