Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2013

Present:

Councillor Curley – Chair
Councillor Shaukat Ali, Amesbury, Austin, Gillard, Grimshaw (NSC/13/01 – 03) Hennigan, Kirkpatrick, Lanchbury, Longsden, Midgley, Peel, and Trotman

Councillor R Battle, Executive Member for Culture and Leisure
Councillor N Murphy, Executive Member for Environment
Councillor Priest, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services (NSC/13/04 - 05)
Councillor Ian Hyde, Assistant Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Royle, Assistant Executive Member for the Environment
Councillor Rahman, Member for Longsight ward
Councillor Paul, Member for Withington ward

Marc Hudson – Manchester Climate Monthly
David Pearson, Deputy Director of the National Football Museum

NSC/13/01 Minutes

Decision:

1. To approve the minutes of the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee held on 11 December 2012 as a correct record.
2. To note the minutes of the Highways Maintenance Working Group on 27 November 2012.
3. To note the minutes of the Cultural Engagement Task and Finish Group on 21 November 2012.

NSC/13/02 National Football Museum

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Neighbourhoods) on the performance and activity of the National Football Museum in its first six months' operation. The report focussed on the following areas:

- Visitor numbers (including age, ethnicity and socio-economic profiles) and survey findings
- Public Programme
- Learning and community activities
- Marketing and Public Relations
- Financial arrangements

A discussion around the charging policy for the interactive elements of the museum was also included at the request of the Committee.

The Committee welcomed David Pearson (Deputy Director of the National Football Museum) who was subsequently invited to introduce the report. Mr Pearson summarised the main headlines of the report with particular emphasis on visitor numbers having far exceeded projections with over 185,000 in the first 5 months and a further 20,000 having visited over the festive period. He added that visitors who were under the age of 16 years accounted for a considerable percentage of visitors, demonstrating a clear family appeal. In response to the Committee's previous discussion around the pricing and uptake of the interactive elements at the Museum, Mr Pearson advised that initial findings had revealed that cost had not been felt to be a discouraging factor and that response had instead been positive. He added that the biggest barrier to uptake of these elements (which formed part of the Museum's wider income generation strategy) had been lack of awareness and that this was now being addressed through additional signage, publicity and training of staff.

In view of the considerable successes as set out above, members sought to explore whether the Museum was making due progress to meet the specific targets to enable a reduction in grant funding by the Council as set out in the museum's governance arrangements. Mr Pearson advised that good progress was being made in the museum's commercial activity which included catering and café revenue as well as income generated through the museum's retail outlet. He added that uptake of the interactive elements had increased each month and an overall growth in spend per visitor had also contributed towards this.

Members enquired about activities to attract a higher proportion of female and Black Minority Ethnic (BME) visitors. Mr Pearson advised that the museum had recently welcomed the Captain of the Women's England Football Team (Casey Stoney) as a guest speaker at an event as part of wider activities to raise the profile of women's football. He also advised that the museum's themed temporary exhibitions were specifically designed to attract new audiences. Discussion then turned to attracting more BME visitors (which had been found to be lower in the Football Museum than in other Manchester Museums). Mr Pearson advised that the museum had been successful in passing the first stage of securing Arts Council funding to enable more community outreach and learning activities as part of a future audience development strategy, which would seek to address this. The Head of Culture suggested that more information around this could be provided in the Committee's next update on the Football Museum and that this could also include information around activities to attract visitors from lower socio-economic groups. The Committee agreed to this.

Decision

1. To note the report and thank Mr Pearson for his contribution the meeting.

2. To agree that ongoing performance reports on the National Football Museum be regularly presented to the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee; and that the scope of the next scheduled report should include a discussion of strategies to attract Black Minority Ethnic, female and lower socio-economic group visitors.

NSC/13/03 Manchester – A Certain Future (Refresh)

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Neighbourhoods) which presented the first full review of Manchester – A Certain Future (MACF) since its development in 2009. MACF is the citywide, collective action plan to reduce carbon emissions and achieve targets toward a more prosperous, healthy and low carbon city. The Committee was asked to endorse the commitment to and delivery objectives of the refreshed document in advance of its submission to the Executive on 16 January 2013.

The report discussed:

- The role of the independent Stakeholder Steering Group (SSG)
- The role of cities and developments across Greater Manchester
- The contribution of MACF to the city's wider priorities
- The neighbourhood focus and contribution to health and wellbeing of Manchester's residents
- Energy Bills and Fuel Poverty

A copy of the full Action Plan was also appended to the report.

The Head of Environmental Strategy introduced the report summarising its key points and the context within which the review had been undertaken.

The Committee welcomed Marc Hudson (Manchester Climate Monthly) who commented on the number of organisations involved in the review, which he felt had fallen. He also commented that the minutes of the SSG were not currently in the public domain. The Head of Environmental Strategy explained that the figures set out in the report related to those who had formally endorsed the plan and that this figure did not reflect the larger number of organisations who had been involved in the process and the number of residents, businesses and schools across Manchester who had been involved in the launch of the review. With regard to the publication of SSG minutes, the Executive Member for Environment, a member of the SSG, said that, if the Committee wanted him to, he would raise this point with fellow SSG members. The Committee agreed to this.

The Committee discussed the importance of involving schools in activities around climate change amongst young people and provoking cultural change. The Head of Environmental Strategy advised that officers had a longstanding relationship with Manchester's schools which predated specific climate change activity and that this also was not reflected in the report. He explained that officers would continue to work with schools and the aspiration was for all schools to be involved at some level in climate change activity. He added that schools were often more able to successfully contribute where a member of staff or a school governor could dedicate the time and commitment to facilitate the process. The Executive Member for Environment emphasised the important role local councillors could play in the raising the profile of MACF amongst the school governors' network and urged members to take this forward in their local communities.

The Committee discussed MACF's carbon literacy targets. The Head of Environmental Strategy informed the Committee of plans to roll out the Manchester Carbon Literacy (MCL) Project, so that 100% of Manchester residents, workers and

learners would have access to, and be encouraged to take up, a day's worth of carbon literacy training by 2015 and that this offer would also be extended to members and Council officers.

The positive contribution of Registered Providers of social housing (RPs) as part of retrofitting activity around MACF was also discussed. A member commented that the most effective partnerships were often those who had close links with the Council. The Head of Climate Change advised that, over the last 2 years, officers had worked closely with RPs to develop this particular opportunity. He advised that in particular stock transfer partners had engaged most proactively in relation to activities around the retrofitting scheme.

Discussions moved to community and co-operative food growing schemes, the importance of sustainable food production, the extent to which Council owned land could be utilised to widen participation and the potential for future job creation. The Head of Environmental Strategy advised that Manchester Food Futures was undertaking a piece of work to explore the issues and impacts associated with community and commercial sustainable food growth. He advised that a report on this could be added to the Committee's future work programme should members wish to explore this is more detail. The Committee agreed to this.

The Chair reiterated concerns about the significant amount of waste, much of which was avoidable, caused by the building and construction industry. He emphasised the importance of the Council providing influence and, where possible, developing appropriate policies to encourage developers to reduce waste through effective management of building sites. The Head of Climate change agreed to look into this. The Executive Member for Environment also offered to raise this with the Deputy Leader with responsibility for Housing and Planning.

Decision

1. To support the recommendation that the Executive endorse the report and continue to support the delivery of Manchester – A Certain Future, in line with commitments made by the City Council in the Manchester City Council Climate Change Delivery Plan 2010 – 2020.

2. To request that the Executive Member for Environment raises the matter of the publication of [Manchester – A Certain Future's] Stakeholder Steering Group minutes in his capacity of Steering Group member.

3. To request a report on community and commercial sustainable food growth schemes and the extent to which Council owned land could be utilised to increase participation.

4. To request that the Executive Member for Environment explores the extent to which the Council could provide influence and, where possible, develop appropriate policies to encourage developers to reduce waste through effective management of building sites.

NSC/13/04 The Greater Manchester Green Deal

The Committee received a joint report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Neighbourhoods) and the Head of Environmental Strategy which outlined the approach to develop a Greater Manchester (GM) Green Deal – central government's new environmental policy that, over the next 3 years, will aim to help the poorest and most vulnerable households, improve the coldest homes and create economic opportunities and benefits across the region through appropriately aligned policies and programmes of work. The report set out:

- The implications of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and Green Deal
- Proposals for the GM-wide retrofitting scheme
- The benefits for Manchester and how these may be maximised

The GM Green Deal Project Manager summarised the reports main themes emphasising the aim to bring about improved domestic energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and support residents out of fuel poverty. This would be achieved by making energy-saving improvements to homes at no upfront costs to the consumer through associated measures under the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation.

The Committee noted the numerous questions and uncertainties around the Green Deal and the ECO policy frameworks around funding and appetite for households to take on Green Deal loans. Members asked what proportion of the £1.3bn nationally available funding would be allocated to Manchester. They also commented on what appeared to be a relatively small number of Manchester residents being supported out of fuel poverty in the reports projected figures. Members sought to establish whether appropriate steps had taken place to test out the repayment scheme to ensure that households were not drawn into further financial difficulties. The Committee was advised that Greater Manchester's household numbers as a percentage of total UK households would indicate a level of approximately £65M of the available funds. With regard to the number of households lifted out of fuel poverty, the Head of Climate Change (Building and Energy) advised that officers had presented a conservative estimate in the business case, which aimed to promote the Green Deal in partnership with the private sector to further stimulate the local market. He also assured the Committee that the financial incentives had been thoroughly tested across GM and that loans were based on a 'golden rule' where projected savings in energy bills should be greater than the cost of repayments.

Discussions moved to growth in the domestic energy efficiency market (largely through the retrofitting of housing stock) and the potential benefits to local business. The Committee emphasised the importance of the quality of workmanship and its inextricable link with value for money. The Head of Climate Change (Building and Energy) informed members that robust processes were in place to manage quality control. However, whilst Manchester was leading on the procurement of a panel of Green Deal Providers, a potential risk could arise through the use of subcontractors. A member suggested that providers who blacklisted employees who were members of a trade union should not be procured to the Panel of Providers. The Committee agreed to this. Another member suggested that the Council's involvement should be

shaped to increase the number of Manchester residents who could be lifted out of fuel poverty. The Committee agreed to this.

Decision

1. To note the report.

2. To recommend that in the procurement of Green Deal Providers across the GM area, companies who blacklist employees who are members of a trade union should be excluded from the procurement process.

3. To recommend that the Council's involvement should be shaped to increase the number of Manchester residents who will be lifted out of fuel poverty.

NSC/13/05 Final Report of the Highways Maintenance Working Group

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which described how the Highways Maintenance Working Group conducted its recent review of Highways maintenance in Manchester. The Committee was asked to endorse the recommendations of the Working Group and receive a report on the implementation the revised processes in six months' time.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services described the collaborative approach of the Working Group as incredibly useful. The Chair invited Councillor Trotman (Chair of the Working Group) to introduce the report. Councillor Trotman thanked all members and officers for their valuable contribution to the Group

The Committee went on to discuss the importance of quality of workmanship, the difficulty in assuring quality standards were consistently met, particularly where subcontractors were involved and the negative effect this had on the public's perception of the Council. A member suggested that the scope of the report scheduled in six months time be amended to also include:

- a full understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Neighbourhood Delivery Teams and the Capital Programme Division.
- an explanation of how works are managed effectively and where responsibilities lie should issues arise,
- a full breakdown of what a schedule of works will entail within any particular programme
- how communication between members, officers and department is made and to what extent
- a clear and transparent understanding of all associated costs linked to any programme

The Committee agreed to this.

Decision:

1. To support the recommendations of the Highways Maintenance Working Group.

2. To agree that a future report be submitted to the Committee in six months which discusses the implementation of the revised Highways Maintenance processes and also presents:-
   - a full understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Neighbourhood Delivery Teams and the Capital Programme Division.
   - an explanation of how works are managed effectively and where responsibilities lie should issues occur
   - a full breakdown of what a schedule of works will entail within any particular programme
   - how communication between members, officers and department is made and to what extent
   - a clear and transparent understanding of all associated costs linked to any programme

NSC/13/06 Overview report

The Overview report was submitted to the Committee which contained information to assist Committee members in carrying out their role. This report contained a summary of the key decisions due to be taken which came under the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee's remit. A summary of the Committee's previous recommendations was included together with an information report on proposals to revise the existing taxi-rank on Fairfield Street (Piccadilly Station). The Committee's future work programme was also included as an appendix.

A member suggested that the scope of the future report on Highways Maintenance be amended to incorporate matters relating pooling and drainage. The Committee agreed to this.

Decision

1. To note the report and agree the future work programme.

2. To request that the scope of the future report on Maintenance of Roads and Pavements be amended to include a discussion of issues relating to pooling and drainage.