

## **Communities and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2010**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Flanagan - In the Chair  
Councillors Barnes (Items CN/10/47 – 54), Bracegirdle, Curley, Helsby, Karney, Kirkpatrick, Lewis, Loughman, McCulley, E. Newman, O'Connor, Rahman (Items CN/10/49 – 55), Ryan and Williams

#### **Also Present:**

Councillor Amesbury, Executive Member for Arts and Leisure  
Councillor Andrews, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services  
Councillor R Battle, Assistant Executive Member for Arts and Leisure  
Councillor Hitchen, ward member for Miles Platting and Newton Heath  
Councillor Leese, Leader of the Council  
Councillor Longsdon, Assistant Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services  
Councillor N Murphy, Executive Member for Environment

### **CN/10/47            Minutes**

The Committee discussed the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2010. A member noted that under item CN/10/40 on the Heaton Park Facilities Development, he had asked for the Committee to recommend that the prices for using the facilities include concessions for Manchester Leisure Pass users, in order for the facilities to benefit Manchester.

#### **Decision:**

1. To approve the minutes of the meeting on 20 July 2010.
2. To recommend that Head of Leisure look into the feasibility of having concessions for Manchester Leisure Pass users for using the new facilities at Heaton Park.

### **CN/10/48            Information and Overview Report**

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted providing information about future key decisions within the Committee's remit. Members were asked to note the responses to the Committee's previous recommendations.

The Committee agreed to add an item to the work programme on the work that Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) does in the community with the Council and the impact that budgetary cuts will have on it.

The Committee also agreed to add an item to the work programme on the enforcement of dog fouling rules, to include the following information:

- What enforcement measures are available and if they are being used to the full effect.
- How quickly the Council responds to the need for cleaning, and whether this can be improved.
- The figures on dog fouling by ward.
- How the Council is ensuring that the rules will be followed in new parks.
- How the Council works with registered social landlords to reduce occurrences.

**Decision:**

1. To agree the work programme
2. To add an item to the work programme on the work that the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service does with the Council in the Community. To include information on how the budgetary cuts will affect this work.
3. To add an item to the work programme on the enforcement of dog fouling.

**CN/10/49            Visit to the Airport**

Prior to the meeting the Committee attended a site visit to Wythenshawe and Manchester Airport to look at the effects that the airport has on residential areas close by. The Chair gave a verbal report to the Committee on what members had learned on the visit and the Committee discussed how they could investigate the problems in the future in order to improve the situation for residents in the Wythenshawe area.

Members visited various local areas to look at problems with car parking in residential streets and the expanse of large car parks. Charging taxis for dropping off customers at the airport had led to taxis dropping the customers off on streets close to the airport, which exacerbated the problem of parking and traffic in residential streets.

Residents who lived within a certain area of the airport are able to claim the costs of their double glazing. The Committee was concerned that this area was not wide enough and wanted to see what could be done to expand it. Members also wanted look into whether it could be extended to include primary schools close by.

The Committee wanted to look at how to ensure that Manchester Airport Community Trust Fund, a charity established to protect the local environment, is being accessed by and promoted to Manchester residents.

After they visited the local areas, the members visited the airport itself and spoke to the staff there about the work they were doing to alleviate the negative effects of the airport. The Chair thanked the staff from Manchester Airport for the visit.

**Decision:**

1. To thank the staff from Manchester Airport for the visit.

2. To investigate in more detail how the negative impact Manchester Airport has on the local community can be alleviated. To concentrate on:
  - Noise prevention and the Sound Insulation Grant Scheme, including what can be done to improve the insulation of the three primary schools located close to the airport.
  - The Community Trust Fund.
  - On street parking.
  - The long term plans for large car park sites.

## **CN/10/50            Ward Newsletters**

A report of the Director of Communications and the Strategy Leader, Corporate Performance about the Ward Newsletters was submitted to the Committee. It was a response to questions raised about the information provided in the June and July meetings. The report clarified the process by which Councillors would be consulted on the production of the newsletter for their ward. The item also included the breakdown of the content of the newsletters.

A member noted that the question on whether the number of editions could be reduced from four to three a year had been partly addressed in the report, in that it explained that reducing the number would not allow for more time to consult because the deadlines were tight in order to keep the content relevant. However, he had also wanted this to be considered because he thought there was not enough high quality content to justify four editions per year. The Director of Communications acknowledged that creative work will always be received differently according to personal taste, but emphasised that they were working to provide content that residents wanted to read.

The Committee thanked the Strategy Leader for providing the clarification on the process to ensure that Councillors get an opportunity to have input in the newsletter for their ward. Members still had some concerns about whether the content would accurately reflect what the local residents want to read. The Director of Communications agreed, and assured the Committee that there was ongoing research to ensure this, such as the freepost questionnaire that would be included in the forthcoming edition.

### **Decision:**

To note the report.

## **CN/10/51            Consultation on the Demolition of Homes in                           Collyhurst**

The Director of Housing provided the Committee with some information on the consultation that had taken place on the demolition of homes in Collyhurst. The information had been requested following a public meeting in which some residents had queried the questions asked and the validity of the results. The Director of Housing provided the questionnaire, the survey results, the residents' information pack and a copy of the rehousing guarantee. The Chair informed the Committee that the wards affected were Newton Heath and Miles Platting and Cheetham. Councillor

Hitchen attended the Committee meeting as ward councillor for Miles Platting and Newton Heath.

The Committee discussed the question “Are you broadly in favour of the Council replacing less popular and more expensive homes with new homes?” which was asked of residents. A member thought this was a leading question, and asked why residents were not given the option of refurbishing their existing homes. The member also asked if the decision would be reconsidered should a majority of the residents in a block of flats be opposed. The Director of Housing said they would look at other options if those circumstances arose.

The Director of Housing informed the Committee that the ward Councillors had been consulted on the questions prior to the survey taking place. He explained that the Council had always planned to demolish the buildings in question, but the consultation had been designed to canvass the opinion of residents who would be affected by the proposals. The Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services explained that the scheme had been formulated when the plans for the Collyhurst Private Finance Initiative (PFI) stalled. It had been decided that the Council could make improvements by rebuilding these homes while they were waiting for the PFI plans to move forward.

The Committee agreed that question 3 allowed for the residents to say ‘no’, and members agreed that they had confidence that the officers had consulted residents fairly. The Executive Member asked that the Committee recommend that local Councillors support the officers in their attempts to communicate with residents about the plans, and the Committee agreed.

**Decision:**

1. To agree that the Council conducted a fair consultation on the demolition of homes in Collyhurst and that residents were given a fair chance to vote against the planned changes.
2. To recommend that the local Councillors support the officers in the engagement of residents and the communication about the plans.

**CN/10/52                      Response to Councillor enquiries referred through Environment on Call**

The Interim Head of Highways introduced a report on the Response to Councillor Enquiries referred through Environment on Call. The report was requested by the Committee in its July meeting and gave details of the performance against Service Level Agreements (SLA) for requests made by Councillors through Environment on Call.

The Chair asked for clarification on whether cleaning blocked drains meant cleaning the drains or ensuring that they were clear. The Head of Highway Services explained that it varied depending on the circumstance. The Committee asked the Head of Highways to look into whether it was viable to replace the cast iron drain covers with synthetic ones which were less likely to be stolen.

The Committee discussed the SLA for contractors dealing with waste. The Executive Member for Environment confirmed that the contract with Enterprise Manchester Partnership Ltd included an agreement to put bins back where they were taken from. The Committee asked for a test to be conducted to determine if this agreement is fulfilled. The Executive Member for Environment also said that Environment on Call should be contacted to arrange for any spare bins to be returned to the Council.

A member informed the Committee that on requesting more bins for dog excrement he had been told by a Council officer it was permitted to dispose of it in normal bins. He requested clarification on this. The Committee also asked officers to investigate if it would be feasible to put fire retardant material on bins. The Committee asked for the reasons that the SLA to clear graffiti was 21 days, significantly longer than for other services. The Committee also asked for information on whether there was an agreement in place with supermarkets over abandoned shopping trolleys, for example to ensure that they paid for the collection of them.

**Decision:**

1. To request that the Head of Highways look into the feasibility of replacing cast iron drain covers with synthetic ones.
2. To request that a test of the Service Level Agreement with Enterprise Manchester Partnership Ltd on returning bins after emptying to an appropriate position be conducted, and the results reported back to a future meeting of the Committee.
3. To request that the Head of Street Management and Enforcement provide further clarification on:
  - The feasibility of using fire retardant material on bins.
  - Whether it is permitted to dispose of dog excrement in normal public bins.
  - Reasons for inconsistency in recycling services across city.
  - Whether there is an agreement in place with supermarkets on abandoned shopping trolleys.
  - The reasons that the Service Level Agreement for clearing graffiti is 21 days.

**CN/10/53                      New Government Policy**

The Head of City Policy submitted a report on the policy development of the coalition government since the July meeting of the Committee on areas that fall under the Committee's remit. The Committee thanked the Head of City Policy for the report. The Committee discussed the best way to respond to the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), due on 20 October 2010. The Head of City Policy informed the Committee that it would take time to analyse the information in the CSR fully. The Committee agreed that the Chair would look into ways to ensure the CSR is scrutinised effectively.

A member was concerned over the affects to libraries and culture, given the abolition of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and that historically, libraries have

been seen as an easy target for budgetary cuts. The Executive Member for Arts and Leisure reassured the Committee that libraries were a priority. He stressed that Manchester was in a better position than many other local authorities because the five year transformation programme was already underway although he acknowledged that financial constraints would still present challenges.

Regarding the proposed Community Right to Build, policy which states that if a majority residents, with a threshold of between 80 and 90%, agree to a development, planning permission would not be needed, a member asked for clarification on whether this meant that, with a certain level of support, residents could overturn existing planning decisions. She also wanted to know what clarification on the reasons behind the suggestion in the report that the policy “could mean areas with reluctant local residents are less attractive to investors”. The Head of City Policy agreed to look into this and provide the Committee with clarification.

The Committee discussed the changes to Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance and what the proposal to lower the amount tenants can claim and the cap on the number of bedrooms will mean in real terms. The Chair was concerned that the policy would result in the ghettoisation of recipients of Housing Benefit into areas with lower rent, and that the loss of the demand in more expensive rental markets would also cause localised slumps. Members agreed that the Committee should return to this issue once the full extent of the changes were known, following the CSR.

**Decision:**

1. That the Chair will look into ways to ensure the Comprehensive Spending Review is scrutinised effectively.
2. To request that the Head of City Policy provide clarification on the proposed Community Right to Build policy:
  - The powers it will give to residents and, in particular, if it will enable residents to overturn a planning decision.
  - The reasons why it is suggested that the Community Right to Buy policy “could mean areas with reluctant local residents are less attractive to investors.”

**CN/10/54**

**Manchester Day**

The Head of the Events Unit presented a report which reviewed the Manchester Day Parade that had taken place in June 2010 and invited the Committee to make comments on the review prior to the report being considered by the Executive on 15 September 2010. The Strategic Director of Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee that there was a mistake in the report. The report stated that “a modest estimate indicates £5.7m was spent as a direct result of visits and activity related to the Manchester Day Parade”. The correct figure, quoted elsewhere in the report, is £4.1m.

The Committee watched a film which showed some of the floats and other elements of the parade along with the views of some members of the public. The Committee all

agreed that the event in June had been a tremendous success and that the way different community groups worked together showed the best of Manchester. Members welcomed the benefits that were outlined in the report, including the social impact and financial gains.

Some members expressed concern over the level of subsidy that the Council had provided to this year's parade, and felt that it should be a priority to pursue increased sponsorship for future Manchester Day Parades. One member noted that the difference in levels of funding between Manchester Day and other events such as Manchester Pride was considerable, despite the latter attracting many more people.

The Executive Member for Arts and Leisure pointed out that the report stated the total amount of money spent in the city on the day gave a return of £16.40 for every £1 of the Council's investment. A member of the Committee agreed that the Council's investment had been worthwhile, and added that Manchester Day and Manchester Pride were not comparable because Manchester Pride had been taking place for many years and had built up a high level of sponsorship over this time. He also said that Manchester Pride had originally been formed in partnership with the Council and had not attracted large numbers of visitors in its early years.

A member asked whether, given that the intention was to hold the Manchester Day Parade annually, there would be any conflict with the biennial Manchester International Festival (MIF). The Executive Members for Arts and Leisure said that the two events catered for different audiences, and there was no financial conflict. The Manchester Day Parade had been set up for a very different purpose to the MIF, with a much stronger focus on community groups.

The Head of the Events Unit said they expected to increase the level of sponsorship for Manchester Day in the future. In 2010, the event was planned over a period of four months, limiting the time and opportunity to seek sponsorship. Some of the organisations they approached indicated that being unable to provide sponsorship this year did not mean they would not be able to in the future. She explained that if the approval to proceed was granted now, they would have six months longer to plan and attract support in 2011.

The Assistant Executive Member for Art and Leisure emphasised that the economic and social benefits, such as bringing community groups together, that the parade brought to the city were worth what they cost to the Council, and that to discount them risked failing to value people.

The Committee agreed that the aim should be to increase the amount of sponsorship, and that the plans for the Manchester Day Parade should include the event paying for itself in the future. Members thanked the participants, the Councillors who were involved in organising the Manchester Day Parade along with the officers who had organised the event in such a short time.

The Committee agreed to welcome the plans for the Council to support a Manchester Day Parade in 2011.

**Decision:**

To recommend that the Executive support plans for a Manchester Day Parade in 2011.

**CN/10/55                      Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan  
Document: Publication Draft DPD**

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted which gave an overview of the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document (JWDPD) and provided information on the development of the document. The Committee was invited to comment on the proposed plans prior to submission to the Executive on 15 September 2010 and the Council on 13 October 2010.

The Head of Planning introduced the report to the Committee. The JWDPD is a document that has been produced jointly by the ten Greater Manchester Authorities and provides a spatial planning framework intended to deliver sustainable waste management in the region. The Greater Manchester Joint Waste Planning Committee was established to oversee the development of the document, and it is required that the plan is approved by each District's Executive and Council before being submitted to the Secretary of State.

A member praised the plans outlined in the document for being pragmatic and the document itself for being easy to read. The Committee supported the plan and agreed that the work it involved was valuable and important. The Committee agreed to support the recommendations that the Executive approve the document and delegate responsibility for approval of minor changes to the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Planning Committee.

**Decision:**

To recommend that the Executive and the Council agree the recommendations in the report.