

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS O&S COMMITTEE –
PUBLIC MEETING**

1400 hours on Thursday 13 April 2023

Committee Rooms 3&4, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BB

Minutes

Present:

Councillor Mohammed Idrees (Chair)

Councillors: Kerry Brewer, Marje Bridle, Ray Goodwin, Roger Harmer, Saqib Khan, Lauren Rainbow and Ken Wood

Also Present:

Cllr Ian Ward, Leader of the Council

Cllr Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment

Janie Berry, City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Karen Cheney, Head of Service, Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit

Edmund Crosher-Markwell, Community Support and Development Officer

Chris Jordan, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods

Paul Pritchett, Environmental Health Officer

Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene

Jayne Bowles, Scrutiny Officer

Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's meeting You Tube site (www.youtube.com/channel/UCT2kT7ZRPFCXq6_5dnVnYlw) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were

confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

None.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. ACTION NOTES AND ACTION TRACKER

(See documents No 1 and No 2)

RESOLVED:

- That the action notes of the meeting held on 16 March 2023 were agreed;
- That the action tracker was noted.

5. REDUCING FLY-TIPPING

(See document No 3)

Councillor Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment, Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene, and Janie Berry, City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, were in attendance for this item.

The Chair confirmed that the formal tracking of the inquiry recommendations had been completed and the purpose of this report was to consider the further information the Committee had requested regarding cameras and prosecution strategies.

Councillor Mahmood highlighted the key points in the report, which focussed on:

- Grime Watch
- List of Wards where cameras are deployed
- Process and timescale for installation of CCTV
- Localisation
- Fixed Penalty Notice strategies

The following additional points were made:

- Following a bid for £50,000 of government grant money to tackle fly-tipping, the Council had been successful in securing £47,000 which has paid for some new CCTV to increase resources.
- With regard to the Localisation aspect, all elected members have had an opportunity to visit their local depot to speak to service managers (with the exception of Perry Barr).
- The new in-cab service is in place across three depots and elected members are being invited to see the new monitoring system for refuse collection.

- Love Your Environment days have taken place at a rate of one per month in the top 15 wards.

During the discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the following were among the main points raised:

- Members noted that the Waste Enforcement Unit were arranging detailed discussions with Barking and Dagenham but expressed disappointment that this had not already happened.
- It was requested that a report be brought back to Committee once those discussions have taken place and Councillor Mahmood suggested that a table could be produced to compare what Barking and Dagenham see as risk and what Birmingham sees as risk.
- It was queried whether there will be feedback on the Grime Watch videos and Members were told that officers have been asked to include an update on prosecutions on the next episode.
- Where overt CCTV is used there has to be significant signage in the locality of the camera to warn people they are likely to be filmed.
- It was suggested that when cameras are removed, signage could be left in place as a deterrent.
- Covert use of cameras is very highly legislated and is a lengthy process, tested by the Magistrates Court and subject to stringent review and inspection.
- There was a request for communication with local councillors to be improved so that when cameras are installed in their wards they are made aware of who the contact officer is.
- With regard to the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), the responsibility lies with the Waste Enforcement Unit, with Legal Services getting involved when there is failure to respond to an FPN.
- The test for issuing an FPN is that there has to be a 'reason to believe' an offence has been committed.
- It was acknowledged that there was a need for better communication between Legal Services and the Waste Enforcement Unit and it was agreed that the two teams and the Cabinet Member would hold a workshop to look at what can be done to improve things.
- The Chair requested that following that workshop a summary of the outcome be brought to Committee.
- There is ongoing work with City Housing regarding fly-tipping on Housing land and also discussions taking place with Housing Associations regarding land they own.

RESOLVED:

- That a further report on the outcome of the discussions with Barking and Dagenham and the workshop to be held between Legal Services, the Enforcement Team and the Cabinet Member would be brought to Committee in the new municipal year.
- That the report was noted.

6. CLEANER STREETS

(See document No 4)

Councillor Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment, and Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene, were in attendance for this item.

Councillor Mahmood took the Committee through the formal response to the recommendations, including the completion dates, and highlighted the key points.

During the discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the following were among the main points raised:

- Members noted the progress already made in taking on board some of the Committee's suggestions.
- With regard to the recent visits to the depots, a request was made for calendar invites to be sent out for the next sessions and Members were assured that would happen.
- The importance of introducing Local First and knowing who local contacts are was stressed.
- It was suggested that there should be a workshop with all interested councillors in relation to the development of a Litter Prevention Strategy.
- Members heard that the intention was to have a workshop with elected members, Keep Britain Tidy and litter picking groups.
- In response to a query whether Love Your Environment includes Housing land, Cllr Mahmood confirmed that it does include Housing land in Bromford and Hodge Hill and that he would check with depot managers that they all have the same approach.
- Councillor Mahmood advised Members that he was considering arranging a meeting at the Council House to give all members the opportunity to go through the street cleaning schedules for their wards.

RESOLVED:

That the report was noted.

7. LOCALISATION – PROGRESS UPDATE ON NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION COORDINATION PILOT

(See documents No 5, No 6 and No 7)

Councillor Ian Ward, Leader of the Council, Chris Jordan, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods, Karen Cheney, Head of Service, Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit, and Edmund Crosher-Markwell, Community Support and Development Officer, were in attendance for this item.

The Leader tabled a paper showing how Birmingham City Council's Localism policies compare with other local authorities in terms of localised budgets and pointed out that the budgets in Birmingham are far higher than the other core cities and spend per head is higher.

The table in the paper set out the localised budgets that exist in Birmingham and Members were informed that there will be some governance set out around spend.

The Committee then received a presentation on the Neighbourhood Action Co-ordination Pilot from Edmund Crosher-Markwell, Community Support and Development Officer. The presentation covered:

- The background and approach;
- Recruitment;
- Summary of Actions and Impact;
- Case Studies;
- Emerging themes;
- Risk mitigation; and
- Feedback.

The Leader also took the opportunity to tell Members about his forthcoming visit to Nottingham where they have highly visible enforcement officers (one in each ward) who also have powers to enforce parking. If the view is that this is something that could work in Birmingham, the Leader will look at trying to find the money to fund that.

During the discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the main points included:

- The Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinators are currently active in 22 wards across the city. This comes with a £10,000 budget and a process for determining spend.
- Those councillors with a Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinator in their ward have seen the difference that post can make.
- This is a transformational programme for the Council and Members were told that localisation is high up on the agenda amongst the senior officer structure.
- It was agreed this is a creative process and councillors need to work with officers, however there is more work to do on local contacts and ensuring that does not undermine the data collection process in the contact centre.
- Many of the recent initiatives launched were welcomed and Members found the presentation, and in particular the case studies, very interesting.
- The Neighbourhood Action Co-ordination Pilot is about to be reviewed and that will inform how to roll it out and improve it.
- Boundary issues were highlighted and it was suggested that the review should look at Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinators (NACs) being shared with next door wards.
- Reference was made to the letter the Committee had sent to the previous Cabinet Member, which had included a request for a survey of all councillors to test the feeling of members in relation to localisation of services and the Leader agreed it would be a good idea to gather opinion after the funding and NACs have been rolled out.

RESOLVED:

That the report was noted.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

(See document No 8)

The following issues were raised for inclusion in the 2023/24 work programme:

- Voids to be picked up in July.
- The issue of damp and mould and the impact that is having.
- Monitoring progress with regard to reaching a Decent Homes Standard.

The Chair thanked members of the Committee for their work over the last year.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme was agreed.

9. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)

None.

10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

11. AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS

RESOLVED:

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 1604 hours.