

**REGENERATION AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Monday 27th October 2014**

PRESENT – Councillors *Surve* (Chair), *Roberts*, *Entwistle*, *Hollings*, *Casey*, *Whittle*, *Daley* and *C.Rigby*.

Also Present –

Cllr Jan-Virmani	Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Customer Services
Sayed Osman	Director for Environment, Housing and Neighbourhoods
Tanya Gallagher	Troubled Families Programme Manager
Gary Johnson	Service Manager for Public Protection and Environmental Health
Paul Lee	Head of Service Support to the Committee
John Addison	Principal Scrutiny Officer
Sonya Palmer	Scrutiny Officer

RESOLUTIONS

13. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Apologies were received from Councillors Whalley, H.Khonat, S.Khonat and Gifford Kerr.

14. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th September 2014

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2014 be agreed as a correct record.

15. Declarations of Interest in items on this Agenda

Councillor John Roberts declared a personal interest on agenda item 5 ‘Troubled Families.’ Councillor Roberts personal interest was declared as he provides paid support to ACT at Cheethams who deliver a Support Families Project for those families who were previously on the Troubled Families Programme.

Councillor Ron Whittle declared a personal interest on agenda item 7 ‘Committees Work Programme and Recommendations’ as it made reference to Alley Gates. Councillor Whittles personal interest was declared as he works for a company in the same group as Newground who maintain the Council’s Alley Gates.

16. Pre-decision Scrutiny – Selective Landlord Licensing

The Chair welcomed the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Customer Services, the Director for Environment, Housing and Customer Services and the Service Manager for Public Protection and Environmental Health to the meeting to provide Members with an update on Selective Landlord Licensing.

Members were provided with a copy of the Scheme Review Report 2014, which highlighted the following:

- The background on the Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme
- Rationale as to why the Infirmary area, Central Darwen area and Griffin area was originally chosen to be part of the scheme.
- The objectives of the scheme
- Data analysis findings
- Results of management activity
- Lessons learnt
- Partner consultation
- Recommendations and next steps

It was reported that within the Borough there were 57,000 properties and within that:

- 12.5% - Social rented sector
- 14% - Private rented
- 31% - Owned without mortgage
- 32% - Owned with a mortgage

Members were advised that the Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme was only available for the private rented sector if it was a low demand area and making a designation would contribute to an improvement in social or economic conditions or there was a significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour and landlords were failing to address this.

Members held a discussion regarding engagement with landlords and it was advised that there was a percentage of landlords who the Council had difficulty engaging with. It was also advised that the Council wanted to change the emphasis of the selective Landlord Licensing Scheme to something that engages with landlords.

Members questioned whether the boundaries for the areas that were part of the Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme could be altered. It was advised that this was possible and one of the reasons for the review was to obtain local Councillors views in capturing the right areas.

It was reported that the cost per license was £500-£700 per property, however there was an early bird discount if landlords signed up within a certain time

frame. It was added that by signing up to the scheme landlords would receive benefits such as:

1. Access to waste recycling
2. Support with benefit claims
3. The council would inspect the property and advise the landlord of any repairs/issues identified during the inspection
4. Tenants support and advice
5. Knowledge of the area from the Council.
6. Training – e.g. ‘How to end a tenancy agreement’

Members felt that the Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme was not a panacea and the Council should continue with the scheme and extend in some existing areas before they started to cause the Council problems. Members were informed that the Council has to consult with residents, landlords etc. to extend a licence area, which can be costly.

It was advised that Liverpool City Council have the selective Landlord Licensing Scheme across the whole city.

Members questioned whether the Council could make it compulsory for new landlords to be part of the Licensing Scheme before they bought a property to let and if tenants were on Universal Credit the landlord had to be part of the Licensing Scheme. It was advised that in order to do this the Council would need a Bi-Law which would cost approximately £160k, but over a period of time the cost would become a saving.

RESOLVED-

That the presentation on Selective Landlord Licensing be noted and the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Customer Services and officers be thanked for their attendance.

17. Troubled Families

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Customer Services and the Troubled Families Programme Manager provided the Committee with a presentation on the Troubled Families Scheme.

Members were provided with an overview of the Troubled Families Programme and the outcomes of the programme up to October 2014:

- Target over 3 years - 465
- Outcomes claimed to date - 332 (71%)
- 10% reduction in anti-social behaviour (ASB) complaints year on year
- 234 families achieved reductions in ASB/or youth re-offending
- Offending rate by all minors in the Borough has been reduced
- 146 children have improved school attendance

- 73 adult family members have achieved 'progress to work'
- 4 adults have achieved employment
- Improved fast track access to counselling and emotional support
- Improved family budgeting and management
- Improved family self-reliance and step down in place via befriending and community support

It was reported that in June 2013 the Government announced plans to extend the Troubled Families Programme for a further five years from 2015/16 and reach an additional 400,000 families across England. Members noted that £200 million had been committed to fund the first year of the five year programme.

Members were informed that the expanded Troubled Families Programme would retain the current programmes focus on families but it would also reach out to families with a broader range of problems.

It was advised that following the claim in October 2014 the Council would be eligible for inclusion in phase 2 of the Governments early starts for inclusion in the expanded programme. Members noted that this meant the Council would be able to access funding from January 2015.

It was reported that the amount of funding available for the expanded programme was less than half of what was originally available in phase 1. Members also noted that funding for the expanded programme was available for each family who achieved success and was paid in two parts; an upfront attachment fee of £1000 per family and a result based payment of £800 per family.

Members held a detailed discussion regarding the information presented to them and raised several questions with the Executive Member and the Troubled Families Programme Manager. Members were advised the following:

- The Council were working towards helping children improve their attainment and grades once their school attendance had improved.
- In relation to the cost benefit analysis some of the savings per family were not Council savings but partnership savings.
- The demographic figures on page 10 did not reflect the ethnic background within the borough because if certain cultures required support they may not use the Troubled Families Programme.
- The Council was trying to change the way it worked and the Troubled Families Programme was focusing on working with families at underlying issues, not just the problems with one family member but involving the whole family.
- The Council were on target after the first six months of the programme starting.
- The Troubled Families Programme was originally under the Children's Services portfolio and then moved to the Neighbourhoods portfolio; however there was still some input from Children's Services.
- A cost analysis would be carried out for all families in the next cohort.

- There was a 60% chance a child would become an offender if either of their parents had been an offender.
- The Lancashire Woman's Centre offered councillor appointments within 4 weeks if a family was on the Troubled Families Programme.
- In phase 2 families would have to meet 2 out of the 6 criteria to be on the programme.
- The programme was not Government directed. The Government were happy for each Local Authority to produce their own plan and record their findings/outcomes for the programme.
- The Troubled Families Programme was well recognised by all political parties.

It was reported that for 2012-13 the attachment fee would be set at 80 per cent, reducing to 60 and 40 per cent in the next two years, third sector partners would receive £3000 per family per outcome but not all outcomes were successful.

Members were advised that the Government wanted Local Authorities to develop new ways of working with families, which focus on lasting change. It was added that these approaches were likely to incur extra costs but that they would result in a difference in the way the Council worked with families in the future which would reduce costs and improve outcomes. It was noted that the Government were therefore reducing the amount of money available per family going forward.

It was also reported that troubled families cost a great deal of money to local services, with the resources not necessarily helping to change families' long term. £8 billion of the £9 billion estimated to be spent on these families each year was being spent reacting to problems rather than solving them. Members were informed that this programme was designed to help find different ways of working to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of interventions.

RESOLVED-

That the presentation on the Troubled Families Programme be noted and the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Customer Services and the Troubled Families Programme Manager be thanked for their attendance.

18. Waste Procurement

The Director for Environment, Housing and Neighbourhoods presented to Members an update on Waste Procurement as requested by the Committee

It was reported that in September 2014 a report went to the Executive Board whereby the Council approved the recommendation to proceed to enter into a waste agreement with Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (GMWDA).

Members were informed that the Council was drafting a Section 101 Agreement which would form the legal and contractual basis for the procurement which would be finalised in February 2015.

It was advised that the Council would start the transfer of waste to GMWDA from April 2015 onwards.

In response to questions raised regarding the length and type of the contract with GMWDA, Members were advised that it would be for a period of 10 years and it would be a commercial tender which would be confidential to those who were applying for the contract.

It was noted that the Council was also looking to tender the transfer and transport facility to take waste to Bolton to be incinerated. It was reported that the transfer tender would be a 10 year open tender and that there had been interest from a number of North West companies.

RESOLVED –

That the update from the Director for Environment, Housing and Neighbourhoods be noted.

19. Committee Work Programme & Recommendations

The Principal Scrutiny Officer presented to Members a list of recommendations relating to Alley Gates based on Members comments and observations from the presentation received by The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Customer Services and the Director for Environment, Housing and Neighbourhoods on 17th September 2014.

Some Members expressed concerns over recommendation 3. It was proposed by Councillor Roberts and seconded by Councillor Casey that recommendation 3 be changed to read as follows:

‘ That the Executive Member look to identify additional cost saving measures to minimise revenue implications for the medium to long term maintenance of the Boroughs Alley Gates.’

Upon being put to the vote 5 Members voted for the recommendation, 2 against and 1 Member abstained, whereupon the Chair declared the amendment carried. Councillor Whittle played no part in the discussion and vote.

The Chair then asked the Committee to vote on the revised recommendations and upon being put to the vote, 5 Members voted for the recommendation, 2 against and 1 Member abstained, whereupon the Chair declared the recommendations carried. Councillor Whittle played no part in the discussion or vote.

It was agreed that following on from the cancelled site visit on Monday 27th October 2014 for Members to view the re-dressing/re-surfacing of roads that a new date, if possible, would be confirmed and circulated to Members.

Members were reminded that a site visit had been arranged for a tour of the Davyfield Depot on Thursday 30th October 2014 at 2pm.

The Principal Scrutiny Officer asked Members to note the notes of the Performance and Downsizing of Environment (with Highways) Task Groups enclosed within the agenda:

- 15th September 2014 – Street Cleansing and Refuse
- 30th September 2014 – Cemeteries and Crematoria
- 8th October 2014 – Public Protection

The Vice Chair of the Committee provided Members with an update on a recent harmful high visit. Members were informed that the vice chair attended a secret raid that took place with Trading Standards, Engage and the Police at a shop selling electronic cigarette liquids. It was reported that the packaging of certain products did not display the ingredients, which was a requirement.

Members agreed that harmful highs were an issue within the Borough and that the Council were working towards tackling the problem.

RESOLVED –

1. That the notes of the Downsizing/Performance of Environment (with Highways) task groups held on the 15th September, 30th September and 8th October 2014 be noted.
2. That the following recommendations for Alley Gates be agreed:

That the Committee supports the Executive Members 7 recommendations for the continuation of the Alley gating scheme for existing applications up to 2017, subject to a change to the Executives recommendation number 2 so that it reads as outline below;

- 2.1 No more applications would be accepted for alley gates.
- 2.2 Alley gates have had a limited impact on crime and anti-social behaviour and have potentially shifted problems elsewhere, it is felt that Alley gates are not a default solution to neighbourhood ASB and crime issues but could help in certain circumstances.
- 2.3 An application to the capital programme would be made for a 2 year £100k per annum programme to complete the highest need schemes in the borough of those that have already applied to run from April 2015.
- 2.4 Residents would pay for keys (£10.00) as a contribution to the scheme, all residents must agree as a pre-requisite to the scheme being implemented.
- 2.5 Ward Councillors would be required to complete the statutory consultation and agree resident sign up to the £10 contribution.
- 2.6 The alley gating programme would be tendered with a view to securing a contractor that is both cost effective and supportive of local training and employment opportunities for young people.

2.7 A scheme would be set up to offer advice and guidance to residents and landlords who wish to self-finance their own schemes.

3. That the Executive Member look to identify additional cost saving measures to minimise revenue implications for the medium to long term maintenance of the Boroughs Alley Gates.
4. That where possible the portfolio considers for all its consultations on applications for Alley gates that they be conducted digitally to avoid paying publication fees.
5. That officers examine the options available to get the most cost effective price for gates/installation to help further reduce the cost of the scheme.
6. That the Executive Member explores the possibility of receiving a financial contribution from partners agencies for the installation of a gate, where a clear benefit to the partner can be identified.

Signed.....

Chair of the meeting at which the Minutes were signed

Date.....