

## **Economy Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2014**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Green – in the Chair  
Councillors Davies, Ellison, Hackett, Hacking, Karney, Manco, Raikes, Richards, Shilton Godwin, Simcock, Stogia and Wilson.

Councillor Leese, Leader of the Council  
Councillor S Murphy, Deputy Leader of the Council  
Councillor Reid, Chair of the Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee

Fola Agbalaya, Big Life  
Kendra Brown, Big Life  
John Beadman, Seetec  
Jules Blackwell, G4S  
Phil Royle, Jobcentre Plus  
Gary Ferguson, Jobcentre Plus  
Marc Hudson, Manchester Climate Monthly

#### **Apologies**

Councillor Smitheman

#### **ESC/14/35            Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 27 August 2014.

#### **ESC/14/36            Working Well**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Regeneration which provided an overview of a new programme, designed and jointly funded by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The programme supported Employment Support Allowance (ESA) claimants into sustained employment if after two years on the Work Programme they have not found employment. The Committee welcomed Fola Agbalaya and Kendra Brown of Big Life, who ran the programme, and Phil Royle and Gary Ferguson of Jobcentre Plus to the meeting.

A member asked whether the philosophy of the programme to use motivational interviewing and goal setting to support clients to identify their own actions worked. Ms Brown confirmed that the early signs suggested it was working, as people were generally unhappy in their own situation and did want to change. She said that the programme was not overly prescriptive. Ms Agbalaya added that a key part of the programme was that it was integrated with other agencies, so the clients did not have to navigate the various services separately. She said the number of people not

turning up to appointments was very low.

The Committee discussed having a criminal record as a barrier to work, noting that it was not surprising and the NHS and the airport, both big employers in the city, would not hire anyone with one. Ms Agbalaya confirmed that Big Life worked with organisations to encourage them to hire people with criminal records and lots of employers were happy to do so, as long they had the support that Big Life provided. The Deputy Leader said that she had recently attended a talk with employers who were asked if they employed anyone with a criminal record. They thought not, but as a third of adult men have one the likelihood was that they did employ people with criminal records.

A member asked for more detail on what the baseline wellbeing scores in figure 3 meant, with examples if possible. Ms Brown said that wellbeing was the participants own assessment of their mental health, in terms of how optimistic they feel. Self efficacy measured how they approach life and how able they feel to achieve things. The assessment was carried out every three months as well as after any significant changes in their lives. She said that they could provide more detail and examples in the next update report, which the Committee agreed to.

A member asked whether the 33% of participants who identified age as a barrier were young or old and whether employer perception reflected this. Ms Brown said that more young people identified this as a barrier, despite the cohort having a higher proportion of older people in it. The Head of Regeneration added that the cohort reflected the census data that over 50s in Manchester were less likely to be qualified and in long term employment than other groups. She said it was too early to identify trends yet, and needed to be monitored further. She said that the next update report could contain more detail on this and also detail on employer perception.

The Committee discussed how the impact of the programme would be measured. A member welcomed that participants would receive support for a year after finding employment, but it would only be possible to see the real impact many years later. The Head of Regeneration agreed, but said there was no funding for a longitudinal study. She confirmed that the evaluation of the programme would inform discussions between Greater Manchester and the government for future commissioning of programmes. The Deputy Leader agreed that it needed to be considered, as Manchester was the only area of the country with a programme like this, it was important to provide evidence of its effectiveness for future commissioning. The Committee asked for officers to look into this and report back in the follow up report.

The Committee noted that it was early in the development of the programme. It welcomed the programme, and agreed to request a follow report in six months.

## **Decision**

To add an item to the agenda to receive a follow up report in approximately six months on the Working Well programme. To include:

- More detail on the baseline wellbeing scores in figure 3, along with examples illustrating what the scores mean;
- Detail on the trends of self perception of barriers;

- Detail on the employers perception of barriers, and comparison to the participants self perception; and
- How the impact of the programme will be evaluated in the long term.

### **ESC/14/37 Update on the Work Programme**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Regeneration which provided an update on the performance data of the Work Programme in Manchester. The Committee welcomed Jon Beadman of Seetec, Jules Blackwell of G4S and Phil Royle and Gary Ferguson of Jobcentre Plus. Seetec and G4S, along with Avanta who had sent their apologies, were there three prime contractors delivering the Work Programme in Greater Manchester and Cheshire.

A member asked how the outcomes of the Work Programme in Manchester compared to how many people would find work if there was no programme in place. He also asked whether, as the programme had progressed, the people who were easier to support had been placed in employment and there were only those more difficult to support. Mr Beadman said that since the Work Programme had been introduced and representatives from the Prime Contractors had first attended scrutiny they had made continual improvements in performance. He said as the economy had improved, those easier to place in employment were no longer being referred to the Work Programme. Seetec had changed how it supported people to improve outcomes, with an increased focus on the sustainability of jobs. Ms Blackwell agreed with Mr Beadman on all points and added that the reduction in referrals had enabled G4S reduce the caseloads of its staff to provide more intensive support.

A member asked for more detail on Seetec's role in the social enterprise case study, as the description did not make it clear what Seetec did in addition to the support provided by the Growth Hub. Mr Beadman confirmed that Seetec paid the owner of the social enterprise to provide training for Work Programme participants, giving them experience which enabled them to access work.

The Committee asked for detail on how the Prime Contractors approached self employment. Mr Beadman said that Seetec said it depended on the individual, as sometimes it worked for a person, but often did not. He said there could be some difficulties in sustaining contact to provide evidence of a job outcome, but did provide the necessary support when it was right. Ms Blackwell said that self employment was often a good option for people with health problems, and G4S worked with people when they were interested in exploring it.

A member asked how the Prime Contractors supported delivery of public sector reform. Mr Beadman confirmed that Seetec worked closely with the troubled families programme. He sat on its board and Seetec had a dedicated team working with them. Seetec caseworkers worked with Council staff on each case involving troubled families, and fully embraced the programme. Ms Blackwell confirmed the troubled families programme had an exciting approach, using a holistic approach to people.

A member asked why Manchester was performing sixth out of the eight core cities. Mr Beadman explained that it was difficult to extrapolate the data, as it was provided on a contract basis, therefore for the whole of Greater Manchester and Cheshire, and

he only knew how Seetec performed in Manchester. He also said that every time he and other representatives of Prime Contractors had attended scrutiny committee meetings, they had taken on comments and learning. There were 450,000 customers in Manchester alone, but statistics only told you so much. He suggested that councillors visit their local centres to meet managers, caseworkers and participants on the programme. He also informed the Committee that since the last time he attended, Seetec had made significant improvements in employer engagement and a number of retailers, including Poundland, had ring fenced jobs for the Work Programme. He added that Manchester had the three top performing Prime Contractors in the country, and the Committee should recognise how much they had improved since the programme was introduced.

The Committee asked for more detail on how the Prime Contractors worked with prison leavers. Mr Beadman said that Seetec had a strategy in place for prison leavers. All prison leavers in Manchester, Salford and Trafford were referred to the Salford centre, as there was a dedicated team in place there. He said Seetec worked to ensure participants understood the barriers they would face in finding work, and focused on employers who did hire staff with criminal records.

A member asked when it would be clear if the Work Programme was value for money. Mr Royle said it would be at the end of the programme and expected that those at the Department for Work and Pensions currently developing the next Work Programme would be considering the performance of the current contractors very closely. A member asked what the Prime Contractors would change about the Work Programme if they could. Both agreed that it should be more flexible locally in order to respond to local needs, and that a one-size-fits-all approach centrally mandated programme was not ideal.

The Committee agreed that it wanted to consider the Work Programme in a different way the next time it received the performance data. The Committee agreed to invite people who had experience of participating in the Work Programme to attend and welcomed Mr Beadman's suggestion that members visit centres and meet staff and participants.

### **Decision**

To invite people who had participated in the Work Programme when the Committee returns to the subject, to hear about their experiences.

[Councillor Manco declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in this item and withdrew from the room for its duration]

### **ESC/14/38                      Universal Credit**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Regeneration which provided the Committee with an overview of preparations in Manchester for the roll out of Universal Credit. Universal credit has been designed to unify and simplify a number of benefits, and a pilot for Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants would be taking place in Manchester in from September to December 2014.

The Committee were very concerned about the implications of the report and the impact it would have on Manchester. The Deputy Leader agreed and told the Committee that there were hidden aspects which would have a significant impact, such as it becoming mandatory for claimants to find jobs that paid more and to increase their hours. She did not understand how claimants would be able to do that. The Committee requested a briefing note on this.

A member asked what impact Universal Credit would have on the Council and other stakeholders and how they were preparing. The Head of Revenues, Benefits and Shared Services said that the collection of Council Tax would become extremely difficult and it was a backwards step in terms of sharing data. Currently, the Council used housing benefit claims to automatically provide Council Tax benefit, school clothing grants and free school meals. Under Universal Credit, the Council would have to wait until the individual had claimed for Universal Credit and asked for Council Tax benefit and then for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to tell the Council.

She said registered providers of social housing had been preparing for the introduction of Universal Credit for some time, but would have to improve their links with DWP. She added that DWP were aware of the Council's concerns and the need to share data. Universal Credit was extremely complex. The Head of Regeneration told the Committee that DWP had commissioned the Council to provide some services for the first year to provide support to residents, including online information, communications and basic budgeting advice. She confirmed that this would be monitored by the DWP, not the Council.

A member suggested that in 2015 the Committee visit the Barlow Moor Community Centre in Chorlton to meet people affected by the Universal Credit pilot in Manchester, which the Committee agreed to.

### **Decision**

1. To request a briefing note on the detail of the unintended consequences of Universal Credit which may have a significant impact on claimants.
2. To visit Barlow Moor Community Centre in Chorlton to meet people affected by the Universal Credit pilot in Manchester.

### **ESC/14/39                      Update on Community Budgets and Troubled Families**

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which provided an update on the Troubled Families programme. The Committee welcomed Councillor Reid, Chair of the Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee to the meeting.

A member asked for more detail on the long term evaluation of the project. The Head of Regeneration explained it was a highly evaluated project, which started in Wythenshawe, Longsight and Gorton. A randomised controlled trial was carried out and monitoring was continuing. She agreed to report back on how long the evaluation would run.

Councillor Reid suggested that it would be helpful to have the data on the programme broken down by ward as well as case studies to provide more understanding of how the programme worked on a practical level. She added that she hoped the Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee would look at elements of the programme relating to its remit. The Deputy Leader agreed that ward level information would be really helpful, and agreed that seeing more detail about how the programme affected people was powerful and useful.

A member emphasised how successful the Troubled Families programme was in supporting people into employment and asked whether the team was sharing best practice with the Work Programme Prime Contractors. The Head of Regeneration said that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had a team seconded to the Troubled Families team, but they were working on making work and skills more central to the process and arrangements were being improved to do this. She confirmed the Troubled Families team did work with the Prime Contractors.

In response to a member's question the Deputy Leader said that domestic abuse was not high enough on the agenda, and she planned to be taking a lead on it. She felt it was too absorbed into other work and there needed to be more focus on this service.

A member asked for more detail on how the evidence on job outcomes was collated. The Head of Regeneration explained that the data counted the number of people who have moved into jobs and the number of people who had sustained employment for 13 weeks. This was not as long as the Work Programme or Working Well, and it would be helpful if the government made these measures the same as it would be easier to compare performance. She also explained that the next phase of the Troubled Families programme was being broadened to include those with slightly less complex problems, but who were at risk of becoming troubled families.

## **Decision**

1. To request that the Head of Regeneration report back to the Committee how long the evaluation of the Troubled Families programme would run.
2. To request that the data on the Troubled Families programme is broken down by ward.

## **ESC/14/40 Economic Sustainability Subgroup report**

The Environmental Sustainability Subgroup, a joint subgroup of the Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee, reported its findings and recommendations in March 2014. The Economy Scrutiny Committee asked for officers to set out how to address each of the recommendations and monitor their implementation. Officers initially reported back on this in June 2014, and the Committee asked for further work to be carried out to establish a plan with SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited) targets. The Committee considered a report which provided a revised programme of work for the recommendations. The Committee welcomed Marc Hudson, of Manchester Climate Monthly, to the meeting, who circulated a briefing note on the report.

The Environmental Strategy Manager told the Committee that the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee considered the report and endorsed its proposals. It also considered the recommendations made by Mr Hudson, and had agreed that its Chair would meet with Mr Hudson to look into them in more detail.

Councillor Stogia, who chaired the Subgroup, felt the proposals in the report did not describe clearly enough how the proposed actions would deliver measurable outcomes. The Chair agreed and said the proposed activity did not provide clarity on what carrying out the proposed activity would achieve.

A member referred to a document circulated by Mr Hudson in relation to the Scrutiny Review item on the meeting's agenda, and said the language in it criticising councillors was extremely unhelpful. He said that no resident had ever raised climate change with him and that they were much more concerned with poverty and employment, although these were connected to climate change in the long term.

The Committee asked officers to work with Councillor Stogia to develop a revised programme of work for the recommendations of the Subgroup and report back to the Committee.

### **Decision**

To request that officers work with Councillor Stogia to develop a revised programme of work for the recommendations of the Subgroup and report back to the Committee.

### **ESC/14/41                      Outcomes of the Review of Scrutiny in Manchester**

The Committee considered a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit, which presented the findings of a review undertaken by the Council of its scrutiny function. The review comprised a survey and self assessment carried out in May 2014, and all six scrutiny committees were considering the findings. The conclusions of the scrutiny committees would be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group, which commissioned the review.

The Committee welcomed Marc Hudson to the meeting, who circulated a briefing note on the findings of the review.

A member told the Committee it was the first time the survey had been carried out, and it was interesting to see the results. He said that further work would be carried out by members on how to take the results forward.

A member repeated a concern she had raised at the previous meeting: that the Committee was not sufficiently aware of decisions taking place on a Greater Manchester level, which have an impact on growth and the city's economy. The Committee agreed to ask the Chair to discuss with the Chief Executive to see how to improve this.

A member said that he had experienced technical difficulties when filling out the online form for the survey, and suggested that this could account for the low turnout

from members.

The Committee paid tribute to the Chair for creating an atmosphere in meetings which had enabled the Committee to engage with lots of different people in the city in a range of different subjects. The Chair said this was down to all members of the Committee and felt that it did engage well, and fostered a spirit of co-operation.

Mr Hudson told the Committee that Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee had suggested carrying out the survey again.

The Chair summarised that engaging with more members of the public would be a positive step, but was difficult as the Committee relied on intermediaries. She said it would be beneficial to learn from other local authorities and to carrying out more meetings in the community to engage with as many residents as possible.

### **Decision**

To ask the Chair to discuss with the Chief Executive how to improve the Committee's awareness of decisions taking place on a Greater Manchester level which have an impact on growth and the city's economy.

### **ESC/14/42                      Overview Report**

The Committee considered a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which provided a summary of the key decisions due to be taken that are relevant to its remit, an update on actions taken as a result of recommendations and the current work programme. The report included the latest Real Time Economy Dashboard.

The Committee agreed to add an item to the agenda to consider the Council's procurement from small and medium businesses, which would examine the reasons why Manchester Council was bottom of the Greater Manchester League Table of council's procuring services from small and medium sized businesses.

A member suggested dedicating a meeting looking and digital skills and digital and technology businesses in detail. The Chair agreed to look into this.

### **Decision**

1. To agree the work programme, subject to the addition above.
2. To request that the Chair look into holding a meeting dedicated to digital skills and digital and technology businesses.