

## **Economy Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2017**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Richards– in the Chair  
Councillors Davies, Hacking, H Priest, Razaq and A Simcock

Councillor Leese, Executive Leader  
Councillor S Murphy, Statutory Deputy Leader  
Councillor B Priest, Deputy Leader

Miranda Kaunang – FareShare Greater Manchester  
Graham Whitham – Greater Manchester Poverty Action/Oxfam  
Sara Woolley– Wythenshawe Community Housing Group  
Roseanne Sweeney – Wood Street Mission

#### **Apologies:**

Councillors Amesbury, Raikes and Shilton Godwin

### **ESC/17/22 Minutes**

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on the 1 March 2017.

The Committee considered the minutes of the District Centres Sub Group held on 23 February 2017.

#### **Decision**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2017.

To note the minutes of the District Centre Sub Group meeting held on 23 February 2017.

### **ESC/17/23 Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy**

#### **Part 1 – The Leader of the Council**

The Leader presented his report to the Committee and welcomed any comments or recommendations. The report provided an overview of work undertaken and progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities, as set out in the Our Manchester strategy, for those areas within the portfolio of the Leader of the Council.

A Member asked the Leader for clarification on the distinction between what residents valued and felt were important about bringing a family up in Manchester against old style community development, and was there a potential danger of doing less of what residents liked the Council doing? The Member also asked how the Greater Manchester Mayor was settling into his new role and what support was the

City Council providing. The Member asked a further question on whether there were any proposals to look at the regeneration of district centres as well as the city centre? In response, the Leader explained although the Council would always look to try and support residents and communities, the new approach the Council was adopting as part of its Our Manchester Strategy, relied on residents and communities being more self-reliant in developing activities within their communities that required minimal grant support. The Leader advised that the Greater Manchester Mayor had settled into his role well, given the difficult circumstances he had faced within his first few days of office. Due to the recent tragic events, work on developing new policies and reviewing existing ones had only just commenced. A Greater Manchester Leaders Away Day was planned to take place within the next week, which would look to start making inroads into this. Furthermore, the Leader advised that the Council would look at supporting the regeneration of district centres as well as the city centre.

Another Member asked the Leader whether the Council would consider providing as much support as possible to small and medium sized business across the City and district centres who were impacted on by the re-evaluation of Business Rate bandings.

A Member asked the Leader how the Council could ensure small independent business in the city centre and district centres were supported against the increase in online shopping.

A Member asked for clarification on what the challenges would be arising for the City Centre Regeneration programme and sought confirmation that developers did not have too much influence on the Council's regeneration programme.

The Leader advised that the Council would look to support small businesses in terms of ensuring they received Business Rates discounts or rebates that they were entitled to. The Leader added that what was causing problems for businesses, particularly within the city centre, was unrealistic expectations in terms of rent levels rather than Business Rate levels. In terms of challenges from the City Centre Regeneration programme, it was reported that there were still difficulties in tackling aggressive beggars, street dealers of legal highs and street drinkers. There was also a challenge in addressing a co-ordinated approach to tackle commercial waste from businesses within the City Centre. The Leader clarified that the Council needed to work alongside developers as the City needed to continue to grow. Securing the forms of development the Council wanted, often meant difficult conversations around the use and design of buildings and applications had previously been refused where the Council did not agree with the view of the developer.

The Chair asked what progress had been made with the Factory Strategic Board, in relation to the provision of local jobs and apprenticeship offers. The Chair also asked how the delivery of Council services had changed following the Listening into Action events. The Chair asked a further question on what impact the Northern Powerhouse Partnership had had on the City.

In response, the Leader provided an example of the changes made to the Council's Customer Services Centre queuing and triage service following a Listening into Action session which had resulted in improvements to the service. In terms of the Factory Strategic Board, it was reported that it had only met once and the Board was only engaged with the Factory itself at present, not the wider surrounding development. The Leader gave assurance that the issues raised around Social Value would be an instrumental part of the process going forward. The Leader advised that the Northern Powerhouse Partnership had representatives from across the North of England, with only three local authority representatives on it, which included himself. It was entirely funded by the private sector and had been set up as a think tank and lobbying group to develop the economic principles that underpinned the Northern Power House with the intention to turning these principles into actions.

## **Part 2 – The Deputy Leader of the Council**

The Deputy Leader presented his report to the Committee. The report provided an overview of work undertaken and progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities, as set out in the Our Manchester strategy, for those areas within the portfolio of the Deputy Leader (Housing and Regeneration).

The Deputy Leader confirmed that he would meet with the Chair of the District Centres Sub Group to discuss the priorities and future of district centres which would be reported back to the Economy Scrutiny Committee.

A Member asked the Deputy Leader what changes might be made to the preventative measures currently used to tackle the number of homelessness within the City and what was being done to help those facing eviction from private rentals who could not access social housing. The Member asked a further question on the social value aspect of the Town Hall project and what implications might emerge for other heritage buildings across Manchester.

Another Member asked for clarification on how voluntary groups could help provide support to homeless people across the city and whether there was a co-ordinated approach?

A Member asked if the next update could include reference to what the Deputy Leader had been doing to support the Homelessness Charter, of which the Council was a significant partner.

In response, the Deputy Leader advised that due to the scale of the Town Hall project, it would be easier to assign apprenticeships and engage local companies in terms of delivering Social Value, compared to perhaps smaller projects on other heritage buildings. However, lessons would be learnt from the project as it rolled out on how the Council can deliver Social Value on other projects. A key aspect of consideration was that in terms of the Town Hall project, the Council already knew what the building would be used for upon completion. For other heritage buildings, this step had not yet been reached, which made it difficult to engage on the same scale as the Council had been able to for the Town Hall.

The Deputy Leader advised that in terms of homelessness, it was an important element of his portfolio and the challenges it presented could not be ignored. Long term, preventative interventions would be much more valuable than short term temporary solutions. This was an area that would require close working with other Executive Members as homelessness was often the result of a number of cross cutting issues that affected and impacted on an individual, which, if addressed early enough, would prevent individuals becoming homeless. The Deputy Leader advised that there may be a need to look at how the Council could possibly help those individuals suffering from rent arrears in private accommodation, as this often stopped those individuals moving on to other forms of tenure. In terms of voluntary groups wanting to help the homeless, there was a co-ordinated approach and any group that wanted to be involved should contact one of the agencies on the Homeless Charter to ensure their support helped individuals not to be homeless, rather than supported them being homeless. The Deputy Leader agreed to provide an update on the Homelessness Chart in his next update.

The Chair asked how the housing strategy was linking in as part of wider place planning (eg school places, GP surgeries, dentists) and what work was being done around the Social Value aspect of apprenticeships and skills connected to the Town Hall Project?

The Deputy Leader advised that large housing development projects had a regeneration and development framework that addressed the issues of suitable infrastructures. The difficulties in providing adequate provision of services often arose where the demography of a community changed organically. The Deputy Leader agreed to provide a report on the social value aspect of apprenticeships and skills connected to the Town Hall Project to a future meeting of the Committee.

#### **Decisions:**

1. To note the report;
2. To request further updates in six months' time;
3. To include an item on the work programme to look at the Social Value aspect of jobs and apprenticeships connected to the Town Hall Project and other developments across the City; and
4. To consider how the Portfolio Holder for Environment, who has responsibility for skills, reports to future meetings of Economy Scrutiny Committee.

#### **ESC/17/23 Family Poverty Strategy**

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People, Policy and Reform), presented by the Policy and Partnerships Manager, which set out the rationale, development and process that has taken place to complete the Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017/22.

The report explained how the Strategy supported the delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy and in particular how the new Our Manchester approach had been used to develop the Strategy in conjunction with existing data and intelligence. Once adopted, the Strategy would provide an overarching framework and priorities for the

City Council and partners from all sectors over the next five years to improve outcomes for children by decreasing risk and increasing resilience.

The Committee was advised of the next steps which were to be taken, which included communicating and engaging with residents on the strategy. It was anticipated that once the Strategy has been formally adopted, a launch event would be arranged which was likely to be in September 2017. This event would incorporate the 'Our Manchester' principles and approach and would involve residents and partner organisations from Manchester's communities.

The Committee welcomed the following representatives to the meeting; Miranda Kaunang from FareShare Greater Manchester, Graham Whitham from Greater Manchester Poverty Action and Oxfam, Sara Woolley from Wythenshawe Community Housing Group and Roseanne Sweeney from Wood Street Mission.

The representatives commented on their involvement with the Strategy and reflected on the details within the final draft of the Strategy.

Councillor S Murphy (Statutory Deputy Leader) addressed the Committee and advised that the Strategy demonstrated the Council's commitment to reducing inequality and ensuring everyone had better life chances.

A Member commented that it was pleasing to see that previous comments made by the Committee had been incorporated into the final draft of the Strategy, specifically in relation to smoking. However, despite this, there was no reference to a better health lifestyle from the consultation with residents.

Another Member asked what role schools could play in helping address family poverty, as there was a potential conflict between the strategy and some school targets, such as attendance and associated incentives, which would potentially exclude some pupils as there would be an expectation of a final contribution from families towards certain incentives (eg school trips). The Member asked a further question around the issue of adults re-entering work where there was limited childcare available in the area they lived and poor public transport and connectivity options which would subsequently impact on the hours these residents were able to work.

The Statutory Deputy Leader advised that there were intrinsic links between poverty and health related issues, such as mental health, and although the responses from residents, as outlined in the report, did not specifically reference health improvements, a number of the suggestions put forward had underlying wider determinants of health improvement. The Head of Work and Skills advised that it was important that the strategy linked into the strategy for the Local Care Organisation so that the focus was on the prevention of poverty.

The Head of Work and Skills agreed that connectivity and transport was very important and a piece of work was being undertaken between the Council and the University of Sheffield around transport being a barrier to accessing employment, which would be reported back to the Committee. There were upcoming

opportunities with the Buses Bill which would allow the Council to improve access to jobs across the City and the wider conurbation. In relation to schools, it was reported that there was a need for further work to take place, especially where schools offered incentives to meet school targets which were linked to a requirement for families to provide a financial contribution. It was agreed that the strategy would be shared with the Strategic Education Partnership.

The Chair thanked Officers for the report and the representatives from the external organisations for their attendance and contribution to the item.

### **Decisions**

1. To welcome and endorse the Family Poverty Strategy;
2. To agree to look at the following areas at future meetings:-
  - a. careers advice and guidance for young people from a skills perspective;
  - b. curriculum for life;
  - c. welfare reform;
  - d. tackling poverty premium; and
3. To agree that the final draft of the Strategy is circulated to all Members of the Council.

### **ESC/17/24 Overview Report**

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme. The Committee was asked to agree the work programme.

### **Decision:**

To note the report and agree the work programme.