

## **Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2017**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Ollerhead - in the Chair

Councillors Ahmed Ali, Barrett, Cookson, Connolly, Davies, Karney, Lanchbury, Lone, Russell, and A Simcock.

Councillor B Priest, Deputy Leader

Councillor Flanagan, Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

#### **RGSC/17/17            Sir Gerald Kaufmann**

The Committee and other present at the meeting stood in silence to pay respect to Sir Gerald Kaufman, the former MP for the Manchester Gorton Constituency and Father of the House of Commons, who had passed away on 26 February 2017.

#### **RGSC/17/18            Minutes**

Councillor Lone asked that her apologies be recorded in the minutes of the meeting on 2 February 2017.

#### **Decision**

1. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2017, subject to the above amendment.

#### **RGSC/17/19            Manchester Town Hall and Albert Square: 'Our Town Hall'**

(Councillor Davies declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in one of the matters discussed under this item of business and left the meeting while that matter was under consideration.)

At the start of this item Richard Lowe and David McBride of the Manchester Cavallé-Coll Organ Foundation presented the work of the Foundation to the Committee. The Foundation has been formed to support the restoration of the organ in the Great Hall of the Town Hall. They explained that Aristide Cavallé-Coll, an organ builder in France, had the reputation of being the most distinguished organ builder of the 19th century. He had been commissioned by the city to build the organ for the Great Hall in the Town Hall. The Town Hall organ is the only Cavallé-Coll in the UK, and so is of major national historic importance. The organ is in need of full renovation and restoration as much of it is not now working as it once did. The Foundation intended to raise the funds to allow the organ to be removed from the Town Hall, fully restored, and reinstated in full working order for when the building reopens. They then hoped to see the Great Hall and the organ being used again for organ recitals, weddings, chamber music and civic functions. The Foundation had put forward a Memorandum

of Understanding to the Council which it hoped would be the basis of the partnership between the two organisations.

The members of the Committee thanked the Foundation's representatives for the fascinating insight into the history of the organ and the Foundation's plans for its future. The Committee warmly endorsed the intention to see the organ restored and once again featuring as an important part of the civic and cultural life of the city; being made more accessible to the people of Manchester to enjoy. As part of this the Committee discussed how future events programmes for the refurbished Town Hall might better incorporate the organ and the building's other historic assets. It was agreed that the Committee will look into that further at the next meeting. They also commended the Foundation for its intention to develop an outreach programme to involve more of the people of the city, including its young people, in the restoration project and to develop a better awareness in the city of the great value of the asset the city has in the Town Hall.

The Committee asked and it was agreed that copies of the Memorandum of Understanding would be provided to the members of the Committee once it had been agreed and signed.

Following the presentation the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) and the Deputy Leader introduced the report that was to be considered by the Executive the following week. They described the progress that had been made with the evaluation the possible future options for how parts of the refurbished Town Hall might be used. The principal function of the building was to remain as the home of the Council and the location for key civic events in the city. The possibility of also turning part into a hotel had been discounted. So too had the extensive conversion of the basement into food outlets. The favoured options involved the provision of a better visitor experience with ancillary food and drinks provision on the ground floor, a venue for events and functions, and some rooms on the upper floors being let out as office space. The precise extent and arrangements for these facilities would be refined as the planning progressed. The committee welcomed those proposals.

The Deputy Leader explained the special funding arrangements for the project and how the Council was not diverting limited revenue into the project but was going to be using money that could not otherwise be spent on the provision of services to the people of the city. The Committee thanked the Deputy Leader for that explanation.

The committee was told that the previous day the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee had considered the findings from an external review of the experiences faced by Transgender people across the City. One of the conclusions of that had been to seek to ensure that the introduction of gender neutral toilet facilities was part of the planning for the refurbishment of the Town Hall. The committee now discussed that and supported the proposal as put forward by the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee. The Committee also added to that the provision of gender neutral baby-change facilities in the refurbished building.

The Deputy Leader supported these suggestions and confirmed that plans for such facilities would be included as much as the constraints of the building's design and features was going to allow. It was possible that some of the toilets could not be

easily made gender neutral without harming the character and historic features of the building: the original architect had not designed them to make that sort of adaptation easy. Nevertheless, where it was going to be feasible, the plans would look to include such facilities. He also assured the Committee that once reopened the building was to be fully accessible.

The committee then discussed the intention to realise significant social value from the contracts that the Council was to let for the work on the building. In particular how that social value was to be secured at all levels of contracting: not just in the principal contracts let by the Council itself, but also in the subcontracts let by the main contractors for the project. Members were also interested in the steps that were to be taken to ensure that the work created employment opportunities for local people and local contractors. The use of a 'Project Bank Account' within the project was also suggested, to ensure subcontractors would be paid promptly.

The Deputy Chief Executive assured the Committee that the commitment to achieving significant social value within the project remains very strong and that the means of monitoring and performance managing the social value elements of all the contracts are being developed and will be in place for when the work commenced. The Committee agreed to keep under review the achievement of social value from the project, starting with a report in May 2017 on the progress with putting in place the means to manage performance at all levels of the work on the restoration.

A member raised the feasibility of making more use of the "Town Hall Tours" as a source of revenue for the Council. Councillor Davies withdrew from the meeting while the feasibility of this was discussed by the Committee.

The communications strategy for the project was also raised and discussed. The Committee agreed that it is important that the project includes the use of a range of media to explain the work, the progress, the successes and the overall significance of the project to the city. The Committee agreed to give further consideration to the communications strategy at its next meeting in May 2017.

## **Decisions**

1. To endorse the recommendations being put to the Executive.
2. To request a further report in May on how the ambitions and plans to secure social value in all levels of contracts.
3. To also request for May a report on the communications strategy for the project, how the social value of the works to the city and the people of Manchester are to be explained.
4. To request a third report in May on how the events strategy for the reopened building might incorporate greater access to the Great Hall and the restored organ for the people of the city.
5. After May 2017, to have progress reports on the project as a standing item of business at an interval of two meetings.

6. To ask that consideration be given to a 'project bank account' being used on the project.
7. That members of the Committee receive a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Manchester Cavallé-Coll Organ Foundation once it is agreed.

## **RGSC/17/20 Manchester Central**

Manchester Central (Manchester Central Convention Complex Ltd) provide a range of commercial services in the Town Hall building, managing the letting of wedding venue, meetings rooms and catering facilities. The Committee had requested a report on the implications that the closure of the Town Hall was going to have on their trading and income.

The report of the City Treasurer explained that whilst the closure would reduce the company's overall income it would not harm the net profit as all the profit from the Town Hall trading activities was remitted to the Council. Therefore, the effect would only be a reduction in the Council's income in future years. The report confirmed that this reduction had been anticipated and allowed for in the Council's budgets that had been developed for 2017/18 and beyond.

The Committee sought information on the company's planning in respect of the staff currently employed in the services operated in the Town Hall. It was explained how the company had been anticipating the closure of the Town Hall in its recent recruitment, and how it was continuing to seek on-going roles for those staff in other parts of the company's activities.

The Committee noted the report and agreed to ask the company if it will share its business plan with the Committee later in 2017.

### **Decisions**

1. To note the report.
2. To request Manchester Central share its business plan with the Committee later in the year, and to agree to respect the commercial confidentiality of that business plan if the company agrees.

## **RGSC/17/21 Overview Report**

This report contained the details of the key decisions due to be taken within the Committee's remit and updates on the recommendations of the Committee. The Committee's work programme was included as an appendix.

Other additions to the work programme were raised by members. These included:

- the Council's Budget Response to the result of the EU referendum (item of business deferred from this meeting to a later date);
- a progress report on the implementation of the Ethical Procurement Policy;
- a report, if needed, on the implications of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Spring Budget Statement that was to be made on 8 March, in particular any implications for Business Rates and for Adult Social Care funding; and
- the reports and items referred to above in RGSC/17/19 and RGSC/17/20.

### **Decision**

To agree the work programme, subject to the above additions referred to above.