

Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2017

Present:

Councillor Ollerhead - in the Chair
Councillors Ahmed Ali, Barrett, Connolly, Davies, Hitchen, Karney, Lanchbury, Moore, Siddiqi and Strong,

Councillor Leese, Leader
Councillor B Priest, Deputy Leader
Councillor Flanagan, Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

Apologies:

Councillor Pritchard, Russell, A Simcock and Watson

RGSC/17/51 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2017.

RGSC/17/52 Greater Manchester Combined Authority Governance

The Committee considered a report of the City Solicitor, presented by the Chief Executive of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) which provided an overview of the powers and responsibilities of GMCA and its Mayor and of the governance arrangements the GMCA has in place.

The report outlined the broad functions of the GMCA. Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report, which included:-

- the majority of functions were exercisable by the eleven members of the GMCA collectively ("non-Mayoral functions"). However, certain functions were exercisable only by the Mayor of the GMCA rather than the GMCA itself;
- except where it was required to take a decision itself the GMCA could choose to delegate its functions to its committees and officers;
- the Mayor could delegate "general Mayoral functions" to another member of the GMCA, a committee established by the Mayor to discharge such functions, or to an officer of the GMCA, except where he was required to take a decision personally;
- the GMCA had chosen to establish three overview and scrutiny committees, each consisting of 15 members and politically balanced, chaired by a member of a constituent council who is not a member of the same political party as the Mayor;
- the constituent Greater Manchester Councils did not have a direct role in holding the Mayor or its Members to account; and

- if a constituent council's overview and scrutiny committee were to consider a GMCA related matter, the committee's powers would be limited to making reports or recommendations on the matters concerned to the constituent council or its Executive.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committees discussions were:-

- was there any update on the Prime Minister's anticipated Housing announcements;
- what powers did European Mayors have in terms of interventions within their respective housing markets, with specific reference to the rental market and the rights of tenants, which could be potentially applied to Greater Manchester;
- how much progress had the GMCA Scrutiny Committees made in ensuring the GMCA and GM Mayor were being held to account and where the GM Mayors soft powers subject to the same level of Scrutiny.
- what remit did Manchester City Council have in relation to holding the GMCA and the GM Mayor to account;
- there was disappointment that the Combined Authority had not taken up the opportunity to include the ability for constituent Council's to call in GMCA issues into the Scrutiny arrangements for the GMCA;
- did Manchester's representatives on the GMCA Scrutiny Committees receive papers for all three committees or just the committee they were a member of;
- did each Leader of a constituent council have an area or responsibility and if so could those with specific responsibility be summoned to a constituent authority's scrutiny committee.
- was there was a role for Manchester's representative on GMCA Scrutiny Committees to report back to the Council on the work of the Committees; and
- what progress had been made in relation to transport deregulation and approval of the transport budget and levy.

The Chief Executive of the GMCA advised that the Prime Minister was intending to announce the establishment of the Homelessness Trailblazer, which the GMCA had bid for some time ago and that there may also be an announcement around the Government's intention to conclude a housing deal with Greater Manchester. The Leader advised that the view of the Council was that interventions within housing markets should be retained within the powers of the Local Authority, rather than the Greater Manchester (GM) Mayor. He agreed that there was a need for more power over private landlords and rents but this should remain as a local authority power and any proposal to transfer such power to the GM Mayor would be opposed by the Council.

It was reported that the three GMCA Scrutiny committees had met and started to plan their thematic work programmes, which would cover broad issues within the Greater Manchester Strategy as well, which could develop into the scrutiny of soft powers as well. The Committee Members had also received training on the role of Scrutiny at GMCA level. The City Treasurer advised that Manchester City Council's Scrutiny Committees had no authority to hold the GMCA or the GM Mayor to account but could request reports on something that was relevant to the city. The Leader advised that in practice, when requested, representatives from various GMCA

institutions were willing to attend Manchester Scrutiny Committees. The City Treasurer advised that Manchester's representatives on the GMCA Scrutiny Committees received papers for the Committees they were appointed to but all Scrutiny Committees were open to the public on the GMCA website. Furthermore, a matter could be referred to a GMCA Scrutiny Committee by a member of a constituent council.

It was reported that every Executive Leader had a portfolio of responsibility, Manchester City Council could summon its own leader to appear before Scrutiny Committee in relation to GMCA business but it could not summon other Executive Leaders to attend. The Leader added that the City Council Scrutiny Committees could also summon any of its representative on bodies that sat below the GMCA (eg Transport for Greater Manchester Committee) to attend a Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee was advised that it would be for the Council to determine if it wanted a formal reporting process by its representatives on GMCA Scrutiny Committees. The Leader advised that the CA commissioned a report which analysed how TFGM worked in relation to the rest of the CA, this report was nearing completion and would be reported back to the CA in the near future which would be shared with all constituent councils.

Decision

The Committee

- (1) notes the report;
- (2) requests that Officers provide a report for information on European Mayoral powers in relation to housing with specific reference to the rental market and the rights of tenants and how some of these powers could be implemented in Greater Manchester; and
- (3) requests that Committee Members are provided with the report on the governance arrangements for the transportation arrangements that are being put in place.

RGSC/17/53 Governance and Working arrangements of the 'We Love Manchester' Emergency Fund

The Committee considered a report of the City Solicitor and City Treasurer, which provided a summary of the governance arrangements and gift making approach of the We Love Manchester Emergency Fund (WLMEF).

The report outlined the history of the Fund and its reason for being established. Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:-

- the objectives of the Fund, which included to provide financial relief among the victims of the disaster, including families and dependents of those killed or injured;
- the membership of the Fund (known as its Trustees);
- the donation of £18m to date to the Fund;
- the Fund's approach to the making of grants

- the gifts to date made by the WLMEF;
- the next steps for the Trustees to determine, which included how to approach those who have suffered psychological injury; and
- the approach that would be taken to issue the remaining funds to ensure the Trustees helped all people who were suffering from long-term or delayed effects of the attack or had preferred to apply later on.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committees discussions were:-

- was there a dedicated email address for those affected by the Arena attack to contact the Fund and if so was this widely available;
- was it anticipated that the Trust would be in place indefinitely;
- what would happen to any residual money that was left in the Fund when the Trust closed down

The City Treasurer advised that there was a dedicated email address which was available via the Council's website. There was also a dedicated online support group for all people that had been affected could use to share information. The Committee was advised that the Trust did not see themselves as a long term body. Half of the funds that had been raised had been allocated and it was hoped that the remaining funds would be gifted as quickly as possible, whilst recognising that there would be some people that may need further support in the future. The City Treasurer advised that the Trust had a broad objective to support other charitable purposes as well as those that had been directly affected. If there was any residual money left, it would be for the Trust to determine which other charitable service to support.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) welcomes the approach taken by the Trustees of the WLMEF to provide help and assistance to those individuals and families that have been affected by the attack.
- (2) places on record its thanks and appreciation to all those who have donated to the Fund and also to those who marked their respects at St Anne's Square

RGSC/17/54 Brookdale Park Huts

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director (Development), presented by the Head of Corporate Estate and Facilities, which explained why the demolition of the Huts in Brookdale Park represented best value for the Council.

The report was before the Committee following its previous consideration of a Councilor Call for Action at its meeting in June 2017 (RGSC/17/xx refers) where the Committee agreed to look at whether the decision to demolish the huts in Brookdale Park represented best value for the Council. Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:--

- the location of the building in the park, which itself is subject to regular vandalism and anti-social behaviour, means that there is a need to secure the

- site and huts and the council has an alarm/response service in place at an annual costs of £3,500;
- despite these measures youths still target the building and break in and there has been further vandalism and deterioration of the building;
 - in the last 2 months there have been three security call outs to the building;
 - in addition to the security costs in the past 2 years there have been further costs of £225 in respect of boarding up after the property has been vandalized;
 - the poor state of repair of the building combined with the regular vandalism and break in meant that the building presented a Health and Safety risk and there was a concern that youths breaching the security and playing on and around the hut may sustain injury, so demolition of the hut would negate this potential risk;
 - an estimated cost of replacing the hut was £175,000 plus VAT, whilst the cost of demolition was estimated at £30,000; and
 - both estimates included estimates for on costs, connection or disconnecting utilities, contractor costs, installation or disposal and contractor overheads and profit; and in the case of a demolition the removal of materials from site

There were no key points raised.

Decision

The Committee:-

1. notes the poor condition of the property, the cost associated with securing the huts, the level of vandalism and anti-social behaviour within the park and around the hut and the potential health and safety risks that could present themselves;
2. agrees that the decision to demolish the huts represents best value for the Council.

RGSC/17/47 Overview Report

The Committee considered a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which contained key decisions within the Committee's remit and responses to previous recommendations was submitted for comment. Members were also invited to agree the Committee's future work programme.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committees discussions were:-

- a request for the inclusion of an item of business at the next meeting on the impact of the roll out of Universal Credit for residents of Greater Manchester;
- a request that the Committee considers the governance arrangements around the proposed GMCA transport levy;
- a request that the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group determine which Scrutiny Committee should consider the economic impact of the viability of the proposed bus routes as part of the GMCA transport proposals; and
- a request for an update in six months from the CA as to how their governance arrangements were working which would include how Manchester City Council

Elected Members, who were not appointed to a GMCA body, could contribute to the governance arrangements.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) agrees the work programme subject to the inclusion of the requested items listed above; and
- (2) agrees to refer to the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group which Scrutiny Committee should consider the economic impact of the viability of the proposed bus routes as part of the GMCA transport proposals