

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 19 July 2018
Subject: Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy
Report of: Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

Summary

This report provides an overview of work undertaken and vision towards the delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the Our Manchester strategy for those areas within the portfolio of the Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note and comment on the report.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Our Manchester Strategy was formally adopted by the Council in January 2016 and sets the ambitions for the city for the next ten years, to 2025, for Manchester to be:

- Thriving – creating great jobs and healthy businesses
- Filled with talent – both home-grown talent and attracting the best in the world
- Fair – with equal chances for all to unlock their potential
- A great place to live – with lots of things to do
- Buzzing with connections – including world-class transport and broadband

1.2 Executive Members are collectively and individually responsible for supporting the delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy and for providing political oversight and direction to officers for the better outcomes for Manchester residents. In May, the Executive published its collective political priorities in the Labour Party's Our Manchester Manifesto. Individual Executive Members, all of which are aligned to the Our Manchester Strategy have aligned their priorities to the manifesto.

1.3 This report sets out how I as the Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources aims to update the committee on these priorities over the next 12 months and is the first of twice yearly reports to this Committee, with reports being submitted to Scrutiny Committees at their June and November meeting.

2. Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

2.1 As the Executive Member for Finance and Human resources I have responsibility for the Council's Finances, Budget, Council Tax & Benefits, Resource Procurement, Performance, ICT, Capital Capital Programmes, Social Value and Digital Transformation.

2.2 In addition to being the lead portfolio holder in the above areas I also sit on the board in some of the councils other major projects. Such as:

- Town Hall Transformation (OTH board)
- The Factory
- MCDA (Manchester Creative Digital Assets)

2.3 In Line With the 2018 Manifesto and the Our Manchester Strategy I will be responsible for delivering the above with an emphasis on the following priorities:

- Delivering the 2nd of a three year budget focusing on Our Manchester Objectives
- Social value and best value for money
- Ensuring we protect our most vulnerable Residents.
- Supporting HR deliver the objectives of Our People Strategy.

3. Objectives over the Next 12 Months

Budget

3.1 in March 2017 the Council set its three year budget based around the Central Government allocation which removed a further £35m from council resources over

this period. This is in addition to the previous round of cuts which started in 2010 with the coalition government, in total over the last 8 years the council has lost c350m in real terms. With a growing population and a national shortfall in local government resource, including Health and Social Care, this has put pressure on the council's budget in these areas.

3.2 If we are to deliver the manifesto it is imperative that we ensure the 3 year budget plan is delivered. The Manifesto is ambitious but more importantly it reflects the priorities Manchester residents have asked of us.

3.3 Since becoming a member of the Executive I have met with relevant SMT and Executive to get a reflection of the contemporary situation and what problems may arise that may affect the budget. Over the coming months I will be holding a series of 'Council Priority conversations' with the relevant Executive Member and officers within their portfolio. These will focus on both Revenue and Capital Spending and Social Value and how these relate to delivering the Manifesto which is now a council priority.

Social Value

3.4 SV (Social Value) is a new portfolio brief, this used to sit within procurement, however, this year SV is a portfolio area in its own right. This will further the work already done by the council in previous years allowing, not only allowing a real sense of focus on SV but allowing a more holistic approach.

3.5 Manchester has one of, if not the best social value policy in the country, with a procurement weighting of 20% alongside that of cost and quality. This is the highest of all authorities. Unfortunately, communication around SV and our achievements has not been as robust as it could have been, often meaning our success in this area is not recognised as it is with other authorities. I am already working on this and have myself attended/attending other authorities to speak about Manchester's success in this area.

3.6 Whilst current policy ensures a more robust system for promoting more contracts to local Manchester companies, champion small business, increasing the number of local apprenticeships, improving employment opportunities and reducing the Council's carbon footprint, we can go further. Last year there was a recommendation by the task and finish group to increase SV to 30% (25% SV and 5% contract monitoring), however, it was felt more evidence was needed to substantiate this. I will be looking at this and assessing how we can ensure we get the most out of the current arrangements and how we can then strengthen this further.

3.7 So far I have spoken at several events talking about the importance of social value and what it will mean for our residents. We have held a roundtable discussion and will now be attending the SV Board Chaired by Paul Marshall, which will strengthen the council's approach to SV further. As mentioned above I also sit on several boards all of which have a remit to delivering SV, and I will be ensuring this happens.

Ensuring We Protect Our Most Vulnerable

3.8 Since 2010 central Government have made poor people poorer, and put those most in need of support at risk. The 2017 Budget consultation made it clear that residents of the city wanted the council to prioritise how we look after the vulnerable in our city, and in the our Manchester approach The 2018 Labour Party Manifesto reflected this. We are all responsible for delivering this vision, however as previously mentioned in the report certain manifesto priorities fall within the relevant portfolio holders brief.

3.9 The main role in the manifesto for the Executive member for Finance and HR is supporting other executives to deliver their priorities. However, one of the areas I have responsibility for is Revenue and benefits, my focus in this area will be looking at how we mitigate against the issues arising from the spectacular failed UC (Universal Credit) roll out. Using what tools we have at our disposal to support our most vulnerable I will be working closely with officers and other executive members to look at ways in which this can be done. We are looking at some options around how we can further support residents around UC, which will be reported back to committee later in the year.

3.10 One of the pledges within the Manifesto which also falls under the Revenue and Benefits brief, was the aim to exempt care leavers from council tax liabilities until their 25th birthday. Currently our children leaving care receive council tax exemption up to the age of 21. Whilst Manchester and the wider GM autoraties were out in front on this, two reports both highlight the vulnerability of our care leavers: A Central Government report, Keep on Caring; and a report by the Children's society, The Wolf at the Door. How Council Tax debt collection is harming children. Both reports found that those leaving care were less equipped to deal with the pressures of independent living, especially around managing finances.

3.11 Due to the good work by Council Officers and the Executive, on today's agenda there is a report on the delivery of this priority. This will make a real change in the lives of care leavers and support them becoming independent. We are also working with our bankers, Barclays to look at other methods of supporting this cohort.

Supporting HR deliver the objectives of Our People Strategy.

3.12 In line with the Our Manchester strategy, and the Be Heard survey I will be working with HR to help strengthen the support to the workforce and on how the savings in the budget strategy will be delivered.

3.13 I now meet with the Director of HR & OD once a month to discuss progress within the service, in addition to ad hoc meetings around specific issues. These meetings have proven to be of great value both in terms of supporting staff and in my own development.

3.14 The last Be heard Survey showed that the council is continuing to make progress but it did highlight some challenges including ensuring SMT are visible and connected to lower SS grade staff. Since the survey there has been Our Manchester workshops across directorates with SMT in attendance as well as members of the

council. There are also departmental meetings where senior management discuss with staff the vision of the department. I have attended several of these meetings talking on the issues covered in the report as well as the wider manifesto vision for the City.

3.15 We are now gearing up for the next Be HEard survey and looking at how we can further engage staff in this process. This will be reported later in the year to the HR & OD sub group.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The report has detailed some of the activities I have taken in the 2 months I have been a member of the Executive, but also sets out some of the priorities I am undertaking over the next 10 months. Whilst not explicit, I hope that the report sets out the ultimate priority which is ensuring that we get the best deal for Manchester residents and allow them to partake in the city's success.