



Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday, 8 February 2022

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Council Antechamber, Level 2, Town Hall Extension

This is a combined agenda pack for information only

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Membership of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

Councillors - Russell (Chair), Ahmed Ali, Andrews, Clay, Davies, Hacking, Hitchen, Kirkpatrick, Lanchbury, B Priest, Robinson, Rowles, Simcock, Wheeler and Wright

Agenda

1. Urgent Business

To consider any items which the Chair has agreed to have submitted as urgent.

2. Appeals

To consider any appeals from the public against refusal to allow inspection of background documents and/or the inclusion of items in the confidential part of the agenda.

3. Interests

To allow Members an opportunity to [a] declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in any items which appear on this agenda; and [b] record any items from which they are precluded from voting as a result of Council Tax/Council rent arrears; [c] the existence and nature of party whipping arrangements in respect of any item to be considered at this meeting. Members with a personal interest should declare that at the start of the item under consideration. If Members also have a prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest they must withdraw from the meeting during the consideration of the item.

4. Minutes

5 - 12

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2022.

5. Corporate Core Budget Report 2022/23

13 - 38

Report of Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer and City Solicitor

Following the Spending Review announcements and provisional local government finance settlement 2022/23 the Council is forecasting a balanced budget for 2022/23, a gap of £37m in 2023/24 and £58m by 2024/25. This report sets out the high-level position.

6. Housing Revenue Account 2022/23 to 2024/25

39 - 58

Report of Strategic Director (Development), Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) and Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer

This report presents members with details on the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2022/23 and an indication of the 2023/24 and 2024/25 budgets.

It seeks approval for the 2022/23 HRA budget and follow the Government's guideline rent increase of 4.1% for all properties.

It is also proposed that the City Council continue with the policy of

realigning rents on properties at below formula rent, to the formula rent level when the property is re-let.

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| 7. | Strategic Communications three year strategy and service priorities
Report of the Head of Strategic Communications attached | 59 - 154 |
| 8. | Future Shape of the Council - Digital, Estates, Ways of Working and ICT strategy
Report of Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer | 155 - 168 |

This report has been written to provide an update on the Future Shape Programme including an update on Development of the ICT Strategy and the Estates Strategy (linked to how we work) and how they relate to the programme.

Future Shape of the Council is a two-year transformation programme designed to enable MCC to be in the best possible shape to deliver its ambitions as set out in the Our Manchester Strategy whilst meeting the external challenges the council face from budget pressures and the response and recovery to Covid 19.

The digital agenda, Estates and Ways of Working forms a major workstream within the Future Shape programme and ICT support will be integral to its successful delivery. This paper sets out this work.

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| 9. | Overview Report
Report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit. | 169 - 186 |
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This report provides the Committee with details of key decisions that fall within the Committee's remit and an update on actions resulting from the Committee's recommendations. The report also includes the Committee's work programme, which the Committee is asked to amend as appropriate and agree.

Information about the Committee

Scrutiny Committees represent the interests of local people about important issues that affect them. They look at how the decisions, policies and services of the Council and other key public agencies impact on the city and its residents. Scrutiny Committees do not take decisions but can make recommendations to decision-makers about how they are delivering the Manchester Strategy, an agreed vision for a better Manchester that is shared by public agencies across the city.

The Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee areas of interest include finances, Council buildings, staffing, corporate and partnership governance as well as Council tax and benefits administration. .

The Council wants to consult people as fully as possible before making decisions that affect them. Members of the public do not have a right to speak at meetings but may do so if invited by the Chair. If you have a special interest in an item on the agenda and want to speak, tell the Committee Officer, who will pass on your request to the Chair. Groups of people will usually be asked to nominate a spokesperson. The Council wants its meetings to be as open as possible but occasionally there will be some confidential business. Brief reasons for confidentiality will be shown on the agenda sheet.

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Smoking is not allowed in Council buildings.

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Further Information

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Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 11 January 2022

Present:

Councillor Russell (Chair) – in the Chair

Councillors Ahmed Ali, Andrews, Clay, Davies, Hacking Hitchen, Kirkpatrick, Lanchbury, B Priest, Robinson, Simcock, Wheeler and Wright

Also present:

Councillor Craig, Leader

Apologies: Councillor Rowles

RGSS/22/01 Minutes

Decision

The Committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021 as a correct record.

RGSS/22/02 Provisional local government finance settlement 2022/23 and budget assumptions

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that provided an update on the main announcements from the provisional local government finance settlement 2022/23 announced 16 December 2021, with a focus on the impact on Manchester City Council and its budget for 2022/23. It also outlines the main budget assumptions behind the Medium-Term budget position 2022/23 to 2024/25.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Describing the key elements of the Provisional Finance Settlement and confirmed that the c£7.7m savings and mitigations, as reported to Resources and Governance Committee on 9 November, were sufficient to deliver a balanced budget next year;
- The implications for the Manchester Local Care Organisation budget;
- Describing the implications for the Council's budget, including the Strategy to close the remaining budget gap; and
- Conclusions and next steps, noting that Officers had estimated the future resources available based on the information available with the resulting forecast gap of £37m in 2023/24 increasing to £58m in 2024/25;

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were: -

- The fair funding proposals did not reflect a fair approach to funding for local government;

- The Council's budget position was not one of choice and was something that government had enforced on Manchester through ten years of austerity measures and the people of Manchester deserved better;
- How confident were officers with the integrity of the projected levels of savings that the Council would need to make for 2023/24 and 2024/25;
- In considering the variations amongst Local Authorities in the effective operation of care markets in their areas, how well placed was Manchester in relation to the payment to residential and domiciliary care providers for carrying out the range of activities at appropriate rates and had consideration been given to working with other local Authorities to address this;
- How were the NHS reforms going to be integrated with the Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO) and what would be the potential impact of these reforms on the Council's Adult Social Care provision;
- How had the budget mitigation of £2.5m for Adults Homeless demand management been determined;
- Assurance was sought if as part of the savings £2m associated with staff budgeting and vacancy factors would not be as a result of a reduction in the staff;
- What was the underlying figure of actual use of 'classic' reserves, setting aside the additional funding that had been provided to tackle covid, which was inflating the appearance of both the reserves and use of reserves figures; and
- Had previous funding to tackle domestic violence and abuse now been incorporated into mainstream funding.

The Deputy City Treasurer advised that a multi-year model was used to determine the level of savings required. This was refreshed during the course of the year as more information became available and the level of savings proposed for 2023/24 and 2024/25 were best estimates at present. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer added that as well as the Council's own internal assumptions on demand and the delivery of savings, a number of projections in regards to income needed to be made and the level of future government funding. Given it was only a one year settlement, the future of Business Rates retention and the potential impact of the Fairer Funding Review, it was very difficult to do this with great accuracy.

The Deputy City Treasurer explained that there was a national issue around appropriate payment in the care market. For Manchester, there was a higher proportion of care residents who were fully funded by the Council, meaning less scope for cross subsidisation between private clients and council paid for clients that the fair cost of care review was seeking to address. There was however, still an issue of sustainability within the market, that also needs addressing as part of the reforms.

The Council was undertaking market sustainability work and £1.8m had been made available from the Social Care levy to help support the sustainability and work with providers. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer commented that the Council was also committed to being a Real Living Wage employer and had signed up to the Unison Ethical Care Charter with additional investment to ensure all home care providers were paid at the real living wage as a minimum. In terms of working with other Local Authorities there was an active group of Greater Manchester Social Care Directors who collaborated on this type of work.

The Deputy Treasurer advised that the NHS was still awaiting their settlement figure from Government and the commencement of the new Integrated Care Organisations would now be delayed until July 2022. This, along with the impact of tackling Covid meant it had been difficult to undertake any long-term planning. He added that that both the Council's and the NHS budgets' were aligned, and the Council and MLCO were working through the 'Better Outcomes, Better Lives' workstream to put plans in place to best use available funding streams.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer advised that the savings in Homelessness and Adult Social Care were not savings and resulted from an over estimate of the impact of covid on the the demand for delivering services in 2021/22 and as a result the funding amount had been corrected.

It was explained that the savings projected in relation to staff budgeting and vacancy factors had been determined using two factors. The first being that Council budgeted at top of grade for all staff and as in previous years, the Council often underspent on staffing cost as not all staff were at the top of their grade. Secondly there was often a time lag between someone leaving their post and being able to recruit to the vacancy that occurs, so rather than having to take difficult decisions around budget cuts in other service areas, aligning staffing budgets would be more appropriate.

The Leader commented that the budget papers that would be presented to Scrutiny in February would provide greater clarity around the details of the proposed savings.

The Deputy City Treasurer advised the use of £184m Reserves was as a result of receiving Business Rates funding a year in advance as opposed to a year in arrears. This equated to approximately £145m of the £184m. The other use of Reserves was planned commitment from previous years. The Council did have a Reserves strategy to support the budget over the medium term which would be included in next month's suite of budget reports.

Decision

The Committee note the report.

RGSS/22/03 Revenue Budget Modelling – budget assumptions focussing on inflation and demand growth

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that provided an update on the latest inflation and demand growth estimates which are included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background, noting that the assumptions take into the account the likely resources that will be available to fund the budget, including government grant funding, council tax and business rates income;
- Consideration of inflationary pressures, noting the provisions that had been made within the draft Revenue Budget;

- Consideration to demand and demographic pressures, noting the assumed levels of demographic and demand growth for 2022/23 to 2024/25; and
- Conclusions.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were: -

- How much thought had been given to flexibility in the modelling, insofar as support to asylum seekers and refugees placed within Manchester, free school meals during school holidays and the use of private rented temporary accommodation for those who were homeless;
- Had the trajectory of demand in Adult Social Care and how Manchester could manage the funding deficit been considered;
- What work had been undertaken at a GMCA level to address the rapid increase of residents housed in temporary accommodation within the region compared to the national increase;
- The longer term projections for the growth of the city and demand on services would be helpful;
- What proportion of the Council's Social Care contracts had the requirement to pay staff the Real Living Wage; and
- Did the additional £2.3m for the investment in edge of care and early intervention in 2022/23 reflect the growth in these areas, the 3% demographic growth assumption or both.

The Deputy City Treasurer advised that the Council had received a number of one-off funding packages of support and all options were being considered as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process. Concerns did exist around inflation and over the increasing cost of energy prices which would impact on the modelling of the revenue budget. It was reported that a significant sum of funding had already been put in place this financial year to help address homelessness and improvements had and continue to be made.

The Leader added that there were only certain things that the Council now knew about due to experience which could not have been modelled for in previous years, such as the need and cost of free school meals in school holidays.

The Deputy City Treasurer reported that the Council had employed an organisation Impower to help with the implementation of the Better Outcomes Better Lives workstream and support on the financial modelling for Adult Social Care.

The Leader advised that there would be a report to next months Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee that would look at the issue of the increase of residents housed in temporary accommodation which could be shared with Members of this committee.

The Deputy City Treasurer advised that the work of the GMCA had been around tackling rough sleeping, whilst the bulk of the pressure faced by the Council centred around homelessness in families and no-fault evictions and the associated cost of finding temporary accommodation. He also advised that in relation to the Council's Adult Social Care contracts, homecare workers received the Real Living Wage as a minimum, which was a higher rate than the national living wage and in terms of care

home workers they were in receipt of the national living wage at present. As a Council, its minimum payment level to staff was above the Real Living Wage.

The Committee was advised that the additional £2.3m for the investment in edge of care and early intervention reflected both the growth in these areas and the 3% demographic growth assumption.

Decision

The Committee notes the report.

RGSS/22/04 Funding of the Capital Programme

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that provided a summary of the Council's proposed capital investment priorities, which will be included in the Capital Strategy report to Executive in February.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background;
- Describing the development of the Capital Strategy
- Describing the approach to borrowing;
- Describing how capital financing costs were funded; and
- Capacity for additional borrowing.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were: -

- Whilst it was reported that the capital financing reserve could support approximately a further £100m of borrowing over the next three to five years to support capital schemes, would Officers not recommend this; and
- Did increasing inflation in construction costs make it more or less attractive to borrow money from the Public Works Loan Board as opposed to using internal reserves.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that there would be an element of borrowing required over the next three to five years to support the capital strategy but it was not possible to predict the levels of interest and inflation rate rises and as such could not give an exact figure of what this level would be at this stage. It was also reported that the key impact of inflation on the capital programme would be the rising costs for any future schemes and the need to attract more financing, whether that was government grant or borrowing. Whilst interest rates remained at their present rate, it was still appropriate to take a blended approach.

Decision

The Committee notes the report.

RGSS/22/05 Budget Equality and Poverty Impact Assessments

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that provided details on how the approach to Equality Impact Assessments and Poverty Impact Assessments had developed over recent years and how these would be further embedded and strengthened in the Budget setting and business planning processes in the future. The report also covered the budget setting process for 2022/23 and the limited impact this would have on equalities and poverty.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background, noting that the Council had a long-standing commitment to promote equality, celebrate diversity and advance inclusion;
- Describing the approach to equality and poverty impact;
- The budget proposals for 2022/23 were minimal and were largely budget adjustments which did not directly impact on service delivery;
- There was no direct impact on any protected characteristic and/or any aim of the general Equality Duty. As such Equality and Poverty impact Assessments would not be required for the 2022/23 budget proposals; and
- The future approach to Equality Relevance Assessments and Equality Impact Assessments as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24 and beyond

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were: -

- Appropriate resources needed to be allocated to address and tackle poverty and deprivation in the city;
- Was the support committed to children centres driven through this methodology;
- Could the Committee be provided with more information on the brief Equality Relevance Assessment tool;
- An example of how the tool was used would help Members understand how it worked; and
- It was good to see Equality and Poverty Impact Assessments becoming more embedded in then budget setting process

The Deputy Chief Executive advise that the Council would need to look more fundamentally as to where it prioritised its resources in tackling poverty and deprivation. This came with the caveat that there was a lot of duties that the Council had to deliver and had committed spend to these, and it was not possible to mitigate all the impacts of poverty in the city. It was confirmed that the support to Children's Centres was in part driven by the importance of this agenda.

It was agreed that the Equality Relevance Assessment tool could be shared with Members of the Committee as long as it was understood that it was a work in progress.

The Strategic Lead Business Change, Reform and Innovation provided an example of how the Equality Relevance Assessment tool worked to the Committee.

Decision

The Committee notes the report.

RGSS/22/06 Overview Report

The Committee considered the report by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which provided details of key decisions that fall within the Committee's remit and an update on actions resulting from the Committee's recommendations. The report also includes the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to amend as appropriate and agree.

Decision

The Committee notes the report and agrees the Committee's Work Programme.

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Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 8 February 2022
Executive – 16 February 2022

Subject: Corporate Core Budget Report 2022/23

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer and City Solicitor

Summary

Following the Spending Review announcements and provisional local government finance settlement 2022/23 the Council is forecasting a balanced budget for 2022/23, a gap of £37m in 2023/24 and £58m by 2024/25. This report sets out the high-level position.

The finance settlement was towards the positive end of forecasts and no actions beyond those outlined in November are required to balance next year's budget. As reported to November Scrutiny meeting officers identified savings and mitigations totalling c£7.7m which are subject to approval.

The settlement was for one year only and considerable uncertainty remains from 2023/24. A longer-term strategy to close the budget gap is being prepared with an estimated requirement to find budget cuts and savings in the region of £60m over the next three years. In addition, £30m of risk-based reserves have been identified as available to manage risk and timing differences

Appended are the priorities for the services in the remit of this committee, details on the initial revenue budget changes proposed by officers and the planned capital programme.

This report provides a further updated 2022/23 budget for the Corporate Core, this includes proposed changes to the budget and reflects any feedback from the November Scrutiny committees.

Recommendations

1. The Committee and Executive are each invited to review and comment on the directorate budget report.
2. The Executive is recommended to approve these budget proposals.
3. Executive are recommended to: -
 - Note the development of the funding agreement set out in Appendix 1.
 - Support the initial underwriting of the Factory Trust fundraising costs by way of a grant agreement, to be met from the Council's existing MIF

reserve and reimbursed when fund raising is received, and delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer and City Solicitor to finalise the grant agreement, including any conditions for drawdown and repayment.

- Approve lease arrangements with delegation to finalise the details to Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer and City Solicitor.
- Continue the support to families to provide free school meals for the 2022 Easter Holiday at £15 per pupil per week. Vouchers will be distributed to households on a pupil basis via schools. This will be funded in line with the arrangements set out in Appendix 1 of this report.
- To note the Chancellors announcement on the proposal for a £150 council tax rebate for all band A-D properties as set out in paragraph x of this report.
- To delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer in conjunction with the Leader of the Council the finalising the detail of the administration of the council tax 'rebate' £150 payment.
- To delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer in conjunction with the Leader of the Council responsibility for designing and implement the discretionary support scheme. The scheme will be reported back to March Executive.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

The budget reflects the fact that the Council has declared a climate emergency by making carbon reduction a key consideration in the Council's planning and budget proposals.

Manchester Strategy Outcomes	Summary of the Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Providing the leadership and focus for the sustainable growth and transformation of the City Centre and our neighbourhoods and highways
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Ensuring residents are connected to education and employment opportunities across the city.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Creating places where residents actively demonstrate the principles of Our Manchester unlocking the potential of our communities through participation and take responsibility for themselves and their community whilst

	encouraging others to do the same, supported by strong and active community groups.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Creating places where people want to live with good quality housing of different tenures and effective use of the highways network; clean, green, safe, healthy, and inclusive neighbourhoods; a good social, economic, cultural offer and environmental infrastructure.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Ensuring residents, neighbourhoods, businesses, and goods connect to local, national, and international markets. Through working with partners both internally and externally maximise the impact of the provision of new and enhanced physical and digital infrastructure.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with implications for:

- Equal Opportunities
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences Revenue

The changes included within this report will be considered as part of the City Council 2022/23 budget proposals which will be considered by the Executive on 16 February 2022.

Financial Consequences – Capital

There is already an approved capital investment programme for the Directorate, and any further capital investment required to support the Directorate priorities will be subject to the usual Council capital approvals process.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

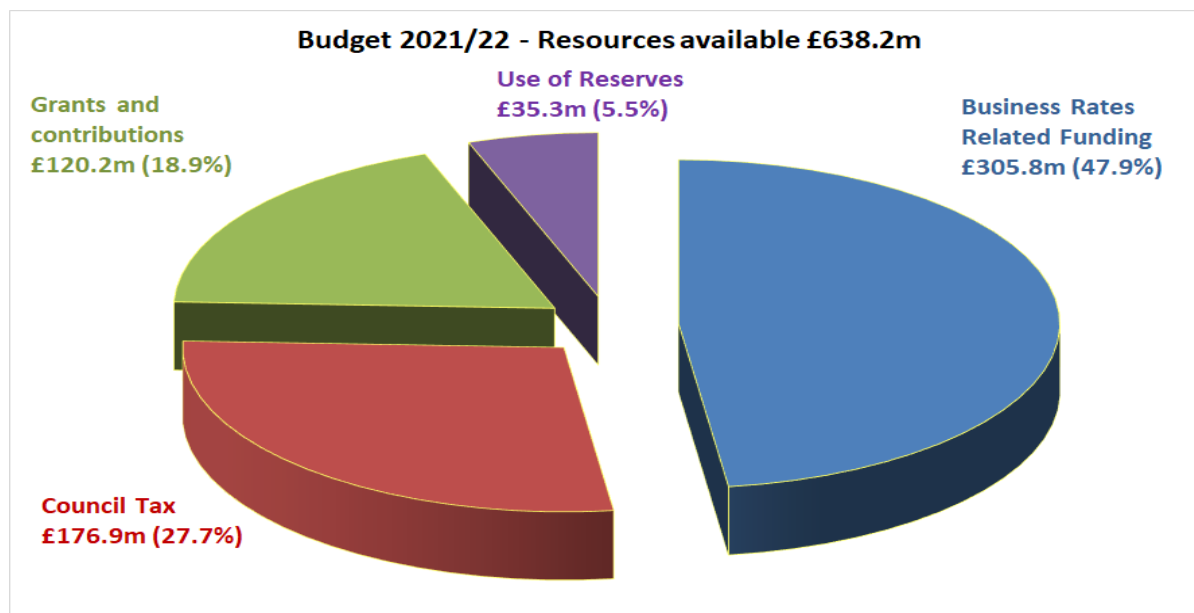
Corporate Core Budget Report 2021/22 – Executive 17th February 2021.

Spending Review and Budget update report – 9th November 2021

[Executive – 17 January 2022 Subject: Provisional local government finance settlement 2022/23 and budget assumptions](#)

1. Introduction and Context

- 1.1. On 27 October 2021, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak MP, delivered the Spending Review and Autumn budget 2021 to the House of Commons. The Spending Review sets the quantum of funding available for local government whilst the Finance Settlement, which followed on 16 December 2021, sets out the distribution to individual local authorities.
- 1.2. The finance settlement has been front loaded and includes several one-off distributions of funding. It is also a one-year settlement. Therefore, considerable uncertainty remains in relation to the position after 2022/23.
- 1.3. The Local Government funding reform work will be restarted in the Spring. This means that the Fair Funding Review and baseline reset are both going to be under consideration again, for possible implementation in 2023/24. This will impact on how funding between different local authorities is distributed.
- 1.4. The final budget position for 2022/23 and beyond will be confirmed at February Executive and recommended for approval to Council. This will be after the key decisions confirming the Collection Fund position, Council Tax and Business Rates base have been made and the Final Finance Settlement is received. It is unlikely that there will be any significant changes to the Provisional Settlement.
- 1.5. The Council's 2021/22 net revenue budget is currently funded from four main sources which are Council Tax, Business Rates, government grants and contributions and use of reserves. In recent years as central government funding has reduced and business rates retention has been introduced the ability to grow and maintain the resources raised locally has become even more important for financial sustainability and is integral to the Council's financial planning.
- 1.6. The following chart shows the current breakdown of resources available.



2. Current budget position

2.1. The indicative medium-term position is shown in the table below, full details are provided in the settlement and budget report to 17 January Executive meeting.

	Revised 2021 / 22 £'000	2022 / 23 £'000	2023 / 24 £'000	2024 / 25 £'000
Resources Available				
Business Rates Related Funding	156,416	338,092	322,337	340,330
Council Tax	176,857	208,965	206,620	217,197
Grants and other External Funding	120,243	104,533	87,374	85,374
Use of Reserves	184,667	36,781	30,592	15,573
Total Resources Available	638,183	688,371	646,923	658,474
Resources Required				
Corporate Costs	120,232	133,058	110,211	114,849
Directorate Costs	517,951	555,313	573,494	601,172
Total Resources Required	638,183	688,371	683,705	716,021
Shortfall / (surplus)	0	0	36,782	57,547

2.2. The budget assumptions that underpin 2022/23 to 2024/25 include the commitments made as part of the 2021/22 budget process to fund ongoing demand pressures as well as provision to meet other known pressures such as inflation and any pay awards (estimated at 3% from 2022/23). Whilst this

contributes to the scale of the budget gap it is important that a realistic budget is budget set which reflects ongoing cost and demand pressures.

- 2.3. Officers have identified options to balance the budget in 2022/23 which are subject to approval. The detail relevant to this scrutiny remit is included at Appendix 2. If these proposals are supported a balanced budget will be achieved. In addition, £30m of risk-based reserves have been identified as available to manage risk and timing differences.

3. Scrutiny of the draft budget proposals and budget reports

- 3.1. The reports have been tailored to the remit of each scrutiny committee as shown in the table below. This Committee is invited to consider the proposed changes which are within its remit and to make recommendations to the Executive before it agrees to the final budget proposals in February 2022.

Date	Meeting	Services Included
8 February 2022	Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee	Chief Executives Corporate Services Revenue and Benefits / Customer and Welfare Support Business Units
8 February 2022	Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee	Sport, Leisure, Events Libraries Galleries and Culture Compliance and Community Safety Housing Operations including Homelessness Neighbourhood working
9 February 2022	Health Scrutiny Committee	Adult Social Care and Population Health
9 February 2022	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	Children and Education Services Youth and Play
10 February 2022	Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee	Waste and Recycling Parks Grounds maintenance
10 February 2022	Economy Scrutiny Committee	City Centre Regeneration Strategic Development Housing and residential growth Planning, Building Control, and licensing Investment Estate Work and skills Highways

4. Next Steps

4.1. The proposed next steps are as follows:

- February Scrutiny Committees (8-10 February) and Executive (16 February) receive proposed budget
- Resources and Governance Budget Scrutiny – 28 February
- March Council - approval of 2022/23 budget - 4 March
- New Municipal Year – early options around 2023/24 & 2024/25 discussed with members

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. Overall, the settlement announcements were towards the positive end of expectations. It is expected that mitigations in the region of £7.7m, as previously identified, will be sufficient to balance the 2022/23 budget.
- 5.2. Officers have estimated the future resources available based on the information available. This results in forecast gap of £37m in 2023/24 increasing to £58m in 2024/25.
- 5.3. The focus will now be on identifying savings and mitigations to keep the Council on a sustainable financial footing. It is proposed that budget cuts and savings of £60m over three years are developed for member consideration. £60m equates to just under 12% of 2022/23 directorate budgets. In addition, £30m of risk-based reserves have been identified as available to manage risk and timing differences.

Appendix 1 – Headline priorities for the service

The Corporate Core is made up of Chief Executives and Corporate Services and delivers four main functions:

- Direct delivery of services to residents and businesses including through the new Customer Service model, the billing and collection of business rates and council tax income, the administration of welfare benefits and services such as Registrars.
- Providing effective support services to Council Directorates and the MLCO (Manchester Local Care Organisation).
- Governance and Assurance functions to ensure the Council operates and makes decisions safely and provides support to members and the democratic process.
- City wide and council leadership with a key role in supporting the delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy and the nine Corporate Plan priorities. This includes supporting relationships with a wider range of key partners across Manchester, Greater Manchester, nationally and internationally.

Revenue Budget

The 2021/22 Corporate Core gross budget is £323.3m. This includes c£192m for benefits payments to residents. The net budget is £80.6m and the core employs 1,932 fte. The Corporate Core net 2021/22 cash limit budget is £80.634m and this is net of the initial £6.635m savings that were approved as part of the 2021/22 budget process.

The budgets include the budgets for both Operational Property and Facilities Management Service that transferred in from the Growth and Development Directorate during 2021/22.

Table 1 – Chief Executive’s Departmental Budgets 2021/22

Chief Executives	2021/22 Gross Budget	2021/22 Net Budget	2021/22 Budgeted Posts (FTE)
	£'000	£'000	
Coroners and Registrars	3,614	2,271	49
Elections	1,167	1,069	12
Legal Services	12,795	6,813	263
Communications	4,516	3,111	78
Executive	966	966	13
CEX Corporate Items	1,517	1,255	-
Total Chief Executives	24,575	15,485	415

Table 2 – Corporate Services Budgets 2021/22

Corporate Services	2021/22 Gross Budget	2021/22 Net Budget	2021/22 Budgeted Posts (FTE)
	£'000	£'000	
Policy, Performance and Reform	18,487	13,024	155
Finance, Procurement and Commercial Governance	8,497	7,486	214
Customer Services	238,997	10,984	523
ICT	15,168	15,168	158
Human Resources & OD	4,293	3,606	84
Audit, Risk and Resilience	1,820	1,341	42
Capital Prog, Operational Property & FM (Facilities Management)	19,511	15,801	341
Total Corporate Services	306,773	67,410	1,517
Grand Total Corporate Core	331,348	82,895	1,932

Included within Customer Services and Transactions above is the Revenue and Benefits service, this includes the payments of housing benefits and other specific support to residents that have been approved by members, as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3 – Revenue and Benefits 2021/22 budgets

Revenue and Benefits	2021/22 Gross Budget	2021/22 Net Budget	2021/22 Budgeted Posts (FTE)
	£'000	£'000	
Revenue and Benefits	206,998	6,986	319
Discretionary Housing Payments	3,850	1,000	-
Welfare Support Scheme	645	600	-
Food Bank Support	100	100	-
Household Support Fund	6,453	0	0
Total	218,046	8,686	319

Headline priorities for the service**Priorities****Direct delivery of Services**

- To provide the best customer service to residents and businesses in the city in the most efficient and effective way to suit their needs.
- To collect as much money as we can, to fund essential services in an ethical and cost effective way in accordance with the governing legislation.

- To provide statutory and discretionary benefits and grants in a prompt, accurate and person centred way supporting the Council's commitment to support vulnerable residents and mitigate poverty.

Providing effective support services

- Implement the Our Manchester Strategy Delivery Plan and Corporate Plan priorities and provide supporting intelligence to inform decision making and monitor performance, outcomes, and impact.
- Facilitate the development of the city's digital infrastructure, to enable delivery of transformed public services and a more economically inclusive and resilient city
- Implement the Organisation Development plan, talent management plan and management accountability framework that are owned by Leaders of the Council.
- Implementation of a more coordinated staff engagement programme supporting and engaging the workforce in ways aligned to staff surveys, Listening in Action, and corporate reward and recognition.
- Develop a three-year Medium Term Financial Strategy that delivers a balanced budget that balances resilience with the delivery of council priorities.
- Monitor evolving demand on services via the design, delivery, assurance, and translation of data models. Use intelligence to lobby for necessary funding and allocate this in a targeted way based on need (e.g., business grants)
- Adapt working environments to make efficient use of space and create environments which support agile working across the estate (this includes the delivery of key projects such as the refurbishment of Hammerstone Road, Gorton Hub, and support to the Our Town Hall Project).
- The delivery of capital projects including The Factory and Our Town Hall project.

Governance and Assurance

- Continue to develop and ensure appropriately robust Governance is in place for all commercial activities.
- Ensure that the council operates effectively, with assurance over core processes and decision making.

Leadership Role

- Implement the action plan that has been developed in response to the Council's Corporate Peer Review, covering key areas of improvement identified within the context of Manchester already being a 'first rate Council' in 'a city of firsts'
- Lead and coordinate the next phase of the Future Shape of the Council programme to ensure a coherent approach to the Council and its' partner's change programmes. This will support the delivery of the council's future operating model.
- Development and implementation of enabling corporate support functions to support the integration of the Manchester Local Care Organisation and Northwards Housing.
- Adoption of a Digital First approach in the Council. This will include piloting new technologies to make back-office processes more efficient, the development of a Data Management Strategy and standards and implementation of the Resident and Business Digital Experience Programme.

- Continue to deliver the Our Ways of Working programme supported by appropriate culture and technology. Adapt working environments to make efficient use of space and support our ways of working, including the delivery of key projects such as the refurbishment of Hammerstone Road, Gorton Hub, and support to the Our Town Hal Project.
- Produce and manage a balanced budget in 2022/23 reflecting Member priorities and the Our Manchester reset, achieving agreed budget reductions and savings.
- We will continue to develop and implement social value and commitments to various charters and covenants that the Council has signed e.g., Care Leavers Covenant and the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Leadership for the Council's action plan to being zero carbon by 2038 at the latest, and support arrangements with partners to meet the city's ambition to live within the science-based carbon budget and be zero carbon by 2038 at the latest.

Deliver on our equality, diversity, and inclusion commitments to support Manchester's vision to be a progressive and equitable city.

- To strengthen our growing evidence bases through the delivery of a Communities of Identity Report to identify the different experiences of individual identity groups in Manchester.
- New strategies, policies, budget, service changes and new models of delivery across the council are underpinned by equality relevancy assessments and where appropriate full Equality Impact Assessments at the design stage.
- Continue to develop and implement social value and commitments to various charters and covenants that the Council has signed e.g., Care Leavers Covenant, Armed Forces Covenant.
- Become a White Ribbon organisation to help end gender-based violence against women and girls.
- Continue to coordinate, provide sponsorship, and deliver equality events in the city, promoting awareness of various identity groups, as well as celebrating diversity awareness through supporting national initiatives such as Black history month, South Asian Heritage Month, Refugee Week, International Day of Disabled People, International Mother Language Day, Pride, International Womens Day, World Aids Day etc.
- Review and strengthen the partnership arrangements nationally, regionally, and locally including exploring the appetite and feasibility of a new Manchester EDI officers' network.

As an employer, ensure a fair and inclusive working environment which recognises, values, and responds to the dynamics and opportunities of a diverse workforce.

- Focus on key areas and actions that will support the organisation to be a place where our workforce fully reflects the rich diversity and talent of the communities we serve at all levels.
- Attract, recruit, and select in a way that is inclusive and drives diversity at all levels e.g., better diversity on recruitment panels, and strengthening induction to communicate the importance of equality, diversity, and inclusion, and what is and is not acceptable.

2022/23 Revenue Budget

Approved 2022/23 Savings

The 2021/22 approved City Council budget identified over £48m savings over the three years 2021/22 - 2023/24. This included budget cuts of £7.187m in the Corporate Core with £6.635m to be delivered in 2021/22 and the remaining £1.153m in 2022/23.

The breakdown of the £1.153m is: -

- **Legal Services - £25k** through a combination of increased income and reduced general supplies and services budgets.
- **ICT - £300k** further reduction in licensing and operating costs particularly around telephony costs.
- **HR/OD - £237k** savings from reduced staffing costs, this is in addition to the £306k 2021/22-part year savings and will be delivered through staffing changes as part of a service redesign which will be completed in quarter 4 of 2021/22.
- **Operational Property - £0.591m** further savings in addition to the £0.646m approved for 2021/22 to be achieved through reductions in the costs of the operational estate through the rationalisation of buildings. Due to the timing around closing some buildings only £0.595m of the savings will be achieved in 2022/23 and the shortfall of £0.642m will be drawn down from the estate transformation reserve.

Covid Adjustments

As part of the 2021/22 budget additional support was provided to allow for reduced income due to the impacts of Covid, particularly on income sources included within the budgets, Total support of £0.598m was provided across the Corporate Core, and this included: -

- £480k reduced court fee income,
- £60k to offset reduced annual leave purchase income
- £58k reduced communications income.

This one-off support in 2021/22 was provided to mitigate the impacts of Covid and is not available for 2022/23. It is expected that the income targets will be fully achieved in 2022/23.

New Budget Proposals for 2022/23

In addition to the £1.153m already approved savings set out above there are further proposed changes to the 2022/23 budgets, and these include: -

Budget Growth and New Investment

As part of the November budget work, several budget pressures were identified, alongside some offsetting savings, in effect reprioritising spending within the

Directorate, details of the pressures and mitigation included in November for both Chief Executives and Corporate Services are set out below:

Chief Executives

Additional funding is required to meet the following:

- An additional £52k is required to meet the additional costs of licenses for the new GDPR system.
- The review of democratic services identified the need for additional capacity requirements in the democratic services team to provide increased support to Committees (£72k).

The above costs will be met from the additional income expected from increased ceremonies in registrars (£50k), increased legal fee income (£49k) and reduced supplies and services (£25k).

Corporate Services

The November budget report identified several budget pressures, along with proposed £0.893m mitigation from within existing approved budgets.

Whilst the £0.893m budget reductions has offset some pressures, there is a net budget increase of c£1.264m which largely reflects two areas of cost that cannot be absorbed from within the Corporate Core:

- The reduction in court summons fees of £0.5m due to the reduction in summons from the increased levels of Council Tax Support provided and changes to debt collection during the pandemic.
- The Gorton Hub is expected to open in 2022/23 and will include both City Council and Partner offices. There is c£0.5m additional resources proposed for both 2022/23 and 2023/24, and this reflects the part year impact of the additional costs, which are a combination of increased costs due to higher specified accommodation, and to cover costs of vacant units until the Hub is fully let. The hub includes additional quality space to meet future requirements for office space and feed into the wider ongoing review of office space and enable future efficiencies. Once the vacant units are let this cost will reduce to c£0.8m per annum.

Details of the above changes proposed as part of the November budget report are set out in the table below: -

Table 4 Proposed Budget Changes – as per November 2021 Report

	2022/23 £'000
<i>Chief Executives</i>	
Legal and Democratic Services - additional £52k ICT licensing costs and £72k additional capacity requirements to support Democratic services.	124
Registrars and Coroners - increased income from increased ceremonies	(50)
Legal services increased fee income for works undertaken.	(49)

Reduction in supplies and services budget from new ways of working	(25)
Corporate Services	
Operational Property – Increased costs for Gorton Hub to cover the running costs of both Council rented space, and any vacant space until a tenant is secured.	500
Commercial Governance - additional resources in Commercial Governance to ensure all commercial activity is correctly undertaken.	117
Equalities and Diversity – additional capacity to support the Equalities and Diversity work.	50
Finance - additional support costs for the income management system	85
Customer Services and Transactions – Due to the increased council tax support provided to residents and changes to debt collection the number of residents summonsed to court has reduced with a reduction in Court summons fee income.	500
Human Resources & Organisational Development - to deliver the identified priority training to all staff across the council additional resources are required.	400
HROD - there has been a reduction in the school's payroll income from loss of schools.	78
ICT – Additional network security and license costs.	100
Internal Audit - A reduction in the level of external fee income received, and other resourcing pressures.	227
Policy Performance and Reform - reduced project income as more funding programmes from government do not provide any revenue funding for associated staff costs.	100
Corporate Core Sub Total	2,157
Capital Programmes - increased fee income and increased efficiencies from shared management arrangements with Northwards.	(230)
A reduction in supplies and services, printing, and mobile telephony costs through new ways of working	(200)
1% increase in vacancy factor across Corporate Services to reflect actual levels of staff turnover.	(463)
Sub Total	(893)
Net Total Proposed November Changes	1,264

Budget Investment Priorities

The budget proposals that went to November Scrutiny and Executive were in advance of the Provisional Finance Settlement being received and set out the funding proposals for unavoidable cost pressures to cover the rising costs of inflation for example, specific service pressures that had been identified and £7m of efficiency measures to deliver a balanced budget, and these are set out above for The Corporate Core.

The report identified that “should further funding than that estimated be forthcoming as part of the Finance Settlement it is recommended that this is used over more than one financial year to reduce the requirement for future budget cuts.”

The report to January Executive set out that the funding announced for 2022/23 makes available £12m to fund additional pressures and emerging risks and that, in line with the agreed approach, "this is used across a three-year period. Full details of suggested priorities for funding will be presented to the Executive in February 2022. This could include priorities such as anti-poverty measures, waste and street cleaning."

In line with the updated Corporate Plan included elsewhere on the agenda and reflecting the political priorities of the Council the following priority areas have been identified.

- Zero Carbon - £0.8m has been earmarked to support delivery of both the council and city zero carbon action plan. This funding will be held in the Policy Budgets until it is allocated to the relevant service areas. Full details can be found in the Climate Change report to the Environmental and Climate Change Scrutiny committee.
- HR Organisational Development - £200k to provide additional capacity in HROD, to support ongoing development of talent and diversity across the council.
- New Protect Duty – £20k of funding is required for Manchester's contribution to a shared GM post to support the work of the 10 local authorities in this area.

Support to Residents

In addition to the above a further £0.7m has been identified to provide welfare related support to Manchester residents. Whilst the council cannot mitigate the combined impact of the removal of the £20 universal credit payment, inflation and energy prices and the planned national insurance increase, an amount of funding has been identified to provide targeted additional support.

Free school meals provision has been available for all the school holidays during 2021/22 but there is no further funding to extend this beyond that point. Therefore, it is proposed to use the above funding to extend this support to the Easter Holidays to all children and young people who are entitled to free school meals attending schools and early year settings (including those with no recourse to public funds).

Schools and other educational settings have worked in partnership with the Council on previous grant schemes. We are satisfied that this approach is the best way to capture most children and young people in the city. When determining the number of children and young people entitled and paid during earlier grant schemes the Council has also included "No recourse to public funds" households.

To continue with the same allocation of £15 per child or young person will cost up to £1.2 million. This will be funded from the additional £0.7m to provide discretionary welfare support to residents, the remaining balance of Household Support Grant funding that will be advanced to schools during this financial year.

Support with Council Tax Bills

The Government announced on 3 February that people will get a £150 council tax rebate in April to help with the cost of energy. Whilst the details of how the scheme will work are not yet available, at the time of writing this report the following information is available:

The Government will provide funding for billing authorities to give all households in England whose primary residence is valued in council tax bands A – D a one-off council tax energy rebate payment of £150. This payment will operate outside of the council tax system, using council tax lists to identify eligible households. In Manchester 95% of properties are in bands A to D and the £150 which equates to approximately 230,550 households.

- Households in England in Council Tax Bands A-D will be eligible for a £150 rebate in their council tax bill in April this year.
- The rebate to bills will be made directly by local authorities. This will not have to be repaid.
- 80% of households in England are in Council Tax Bands A-D, so will benefit from this rebate. The rebate will not be paid for second homes or empty properties.
- We expect the vast majority of people who pay by Direct Debit to receive this money in April. For households in Bands A-D who do not pay by Direct Debit, their councils will be ready to process their claims in April.
- For those with council tax bills lower than £150 that month, it will take a bit longer to receive the benefit in full. Almost all households should see the full benefit by May.
- The government is providing new funding to local authorities for these rebates, as well as extra funding to help with increased administrative costs.
- For those who need help with their energy bills but are not eligible – such as households on income support in higher bands (E-H) or with properties in bands A-D that are exempt from council tax – local authorities will receive £144 million of discretionary funding to help.
- Further details will be set out by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and local authorities.
-

Officers are currently awaiting further guidance on how the ‘rebates’ will be funded and the allocation and guidance for the discretionary funding. A delegation to the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer in conjunction with the Leader of the Council is therefore sought to finalise the details of administering the rebate and the associated discretionary fund.

The other changes to the Corporate Core budgets include the following:

Our Manchester

The Our Manchester team have been funded on a time limited basis, and it is proposed that £474k investment is agreed to provide ongoing funding for the Our Manchester team so that they can continue to support The Our Manchester Programme across the council.

Inflationary Pressures

The Corporate Core budgets have been updated to reflect the employers National Insurance increase of 1.25%, this is an increase of £417k across the Core to fund the 'social care levy'. It is broken down £83k Chief Executives and £334k Corporate Services.

Provision has been made for inflationary price increases and potential pay awards. This is held centrally and will be allocated to service budgets when the details are available.

Increased Vacancy Provision

A 1% increase to the vacancy factor has been included in the 2022/23 budget. Current workforce budgets are based on the top of the grade. The vacancy factor has been adjusted to more accurately reflect the fact that many employees are not at the top of the grade and the current levels of turnover. The total efficiency is £2m and this has been allocated across mainstream staffing budgets. Of this Chief Executives has been allocated £87k and Corporate Services £397k. This considers the efficiency savings of £463k already agreed for the Corporate Core as part of the November budget measures.

The Factory Trust Funding Agreement

To support the opening of The Factory the following agreements are being put in place between the operator, MIF, and the council. These include:

The funding agreement - which sets out the conditions for the grant agreement between the Council and MIF. This is a ten-year agreement which started in 2020/21 for £1.5m per annum incorporating the funding support that was previously provided to MIF. This compliments the £9.8m per annum funding from Arts Council England and other government grants. The amount of the Council's contribution was agreed as part of the original funding package to attract government investment for The Factory in Manchester. Prior to this the funding for MIF was £1m per annum from the revenue budget with an additional £500k in each festival year. As part of the 2020/21 budget setting process a reserve was established from the associated business rates growth from the St Johns quarter to cover the majority of the 10-year grant agreement. This means that a reduced amount of £500k per annum is funded from the revenue budget and £1m per annum from the reserve.

The fundraising agreement – MIF are committed to working with the Council to provide a net £24.17m of funding towards the project capital costs. This is being met through philanthropic fund raising led by The Factory Trust charity, and with MIF through a commercial partner, who are seeking naming rights and other commercial sponsorship. MIF are leading the commercial fundraising process on the Council's behalf and a back-to-back agreement is in place. Whilst MIF have committed to resource the commercial fundraising activity, there may need to be cashflow support from the Council, particularly for The Factory Trust.

It is proposed that the support to The Factory Trust is provided by way of grant, underwritten by the Council's MIF reserve. Any cashflow support provided to The

Factory Trust or MIF will be reimbursed when they have raised sufficient funding. It is recommended that any costs are met from the MIF reserve established to meet future grant payments, until the costs are reimbursed.

The Lease - the proposed lease is in line with the arrangements for similar venues such as Bridgewater Hall. MIF will have responsibility for the general upkeep whilst the council will have corporate landlord responsibilities for the fabric of the building. To avoid large unbudgeted costs in the future it is recommended that the liability is split 50/50 and that both parties establish a sinking fund with each partner making an annual contribution of £252k per annum. For MIF this will be held as a ringfenced reserve. For MCC this will be held as part of the AMP reserve.

Table 2 below sets out proposed new changes and an overall total of proposed changes for Corporate Core.

Table 5 – Total Budget Adjustments

	2022/23 £'000
Approved Adjustments as part of 2021/22 Budget	
CHIEF EXECUTIVES	
2022/23 Approved Savings	(25)
Reverse Covid income adjustments	(118)
Net Total Chief Executives	(147)
CORPORATE SERVICES	
2022/23 Approved Savings	(1,128)
Reverse Covid income adjustments	(480)
Policy, Performance and Reform – establish mainstream provision for Our Manchester team	474
Corporate Services Net Change	(1,134)
New Proposed Budget Changes	
CHIEF EXECUTIVES	
Additional 1% vacancy factor	(87)
1% increased national insurance costs	83
CORPORATE SERVICES	
HROD – Additional resources to support talent and diversity	200
Allocation of £2m staff savings	(397)
1% increase in National Insurance	334
Additional Funding for Residents Support	700
Zero Carbon Funding for resources across the Council	800
Contest – Funding to support Manchester Contribution to GMCA	20
Sub Total New Proposed Changes	1,653
Total New Proposed Changes.	372
Proposed Changes November (Table 4)	1,264
Grand Total Corporate Core Changes	1,636

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Appendix 2

Capital budget and pipeline priorities

The current approved capital programme, as at period 9 in 2021/22, is shown below alongside the funding to be used. Details on potential future investment opportunities are also shown, but these remain subject to approval.

Approved Capital Programme

Service Area	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
The Factory and St John's Public Realm	42,650	46,399	-	-	89,049
Corporate Estate - Asset Management Programme	7,778	4,266	-	-	12,044
Corporate Estate - Hammerstone Road	3,799	10,692	8,704	-	23,195
Corporate Estate - Other	1,133	3,948	-	-	5,081
Civic Quarter Heat Network	4,679	1,377	-	-	6,056
Our Town Hall Refurbishment	53,830	86,064	68,071	42,175	250,140
ICT - Network Refresh	2,652	5,394	1,000	-	9,046
ICT - End User Experience	3,350	727	-	-	4,077
ICT - Other	431	722	5,841	-	6,994
Corporate	2,755	-	500	500	3,755
Airport Loan	-	36,248	-	-	36,248
Inflation contingency	-	11,500	5,803	-	17,303
Total	123,057	207,337	89,919	42,675	462,988

Funding of Approved Capital Programme

Service Area	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Grant	18,071	6,620	-	-	24,691
External contributions	-	-	-	-	-
Revenue Contribution to Capital	1,955	3,128	500	500	6,083
Capital Receipts	8,809	6,966	-	-	15,775
Borrowing	94,222	190,623	89,419	42,175	416,439
Total	123,057	207,337	89,919	42,675	462,988

Future Investment Priorities

The following projects are potential future investment opportunities, which may be brought forward in the future:

1. Capital investment to support carbon reduction measures on the Council's corporate estate remains a significant priority.
2. Further investment in the Council's core ICT systems and infrastructure, including the Council's payroll, HR, finance ledger and procurement systems.

APPENDIX 3 COMMERCIAL AND OPERATIONS

In addition to the Corporate Core, there are other services that are under the remit of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee, these are traded services with Operations and Commissioning and are set out in the following table: The gross budget is £24.07m, with a net credit budget of £10.536m and a total employee of 352.

Commercial & Operations

Revenue Budget

Commercial and Operations	2021/22 Gross Budget	2021/22 Net Budget	2021/22 Budgeted Posts (FTE)
	£'000	£'000	
Advertising	63	(4,175)	0
Fleet	961	(278)	14
Pest Control	717	114	18
Markets	9,152	(1,079)	52
Catering	3,036	172	219
Management	19	19	0
Bereavement Services	2,429	(1,029)	48
Residual City Works	149	149	0
Off Street Parking	7,242	(4,720)	0
CCTV	302	291	1
Total	24,070	(10,536)	352

Headline Priorities for the Service

Commercial and Operations

- Markets – traditional, local, wholesale and specialist markets.
- Pest Control - tailored service for domestic and business premises to treat, monitor and eradicate pests.
- Bereavement Services - Manchester's five cemeteries and one crematorium (at Blackley) manage some 3,000 funerals a year, working seven days a week to meet the needs of the city's diverse cultural communities.

Priorities:

- Investment in New Smithfield Market – business case being prepared.
- Markets – Investment proposals for Gorton and Longsight prepared for potential inclusion in Levelling-Up fund bids.

Commercial

- Civic Quarter Heat Network – providing a sustainable heat and power system to several buildings in Manchester city centre.
- Parking - The service directly supports the transport strategy for the city and our aim is to keep the city's roads safe and moving.

Priorities

- Delivery of outstanding savings from advertising.
- Development of parking strategy and review of on / off street pricing.

2022/23 Revenue Budget**Approved 2022/23 Savings**

Members will recall that the 2021/22 approved City Council budget identified over £48m savings over the three years 2021/22 - 2023/24. Of these savings £5.935m related to Commercial and Operations activities, with £5.76m included as part of the 2021/22 budget. Due to the majority of these being through traded services, there have been adverse implications from Covid, and the following savings have not been achieved in 2021/22: -

- Car Parking income £4.1m income following the bringing back in house of the off street car parking arrangements. Due to ongoing restrictions and reduced numbers of individuals working in the City Centre the usage, and particularly the season ticket sales have not returned as quickly as forecast. It is expected that Spring 2022 will see a continued increase in staff returning and so users should increase. This will be retained under review in 2022/23.
- £225k advertising income from the proposed screen in Picadilly Garden. This was not delivered during 2021/22 and revised plans to meet the advertising income budget target are being developed.

Covid Implications on Income

As part of the 2021/22 budget, additional support was provided to allow for reduced income due to Covid. Operations and Commissioning received one off budget support of £3.136m to support the reduction in car parking income This was one off support in 2021/22 and has been removed in 2022/23.

Inflationary Pressures

Provision has been made for inflationary price increases and potential pay awards. This is held centrally and will be allocated to service budgets when the details are available.

	2022/23 £'000
Operations and Commissioning	
2022/23 Approved Savings	(225)
Reverse Covid income adjustments	(3,136)
Net Operations and Commissioning	(3,361)

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Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 8 February 2022
Executive – 16 February 2022

Subject: Housing Revenue Account 2022/23 to 2024/25

Report of: Strategic Director (Development), Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) Service and Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer

Summary

This report presents members with details on the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2022/23 and an indication of the 2023/24 and 2024/25 budgets.

It seeks approval for the 2022/23 HRA budget and follow the Government's guideline rent increase of 4.1% for all properties.

It is also proposed that the City Council continue with the policy of realigning rents on properties at below formula rent, to the formula rent level when the property is re-let.

Recommendations

Scrutiny Committees are invited to review and comment on the proposed HRA Budget.

The Executive is recommended to:

- a) Note the forecast 2021/22 HRA outturn as set out in section 4.
- b) Approve the 2022/23 HRA budget as presented in Appendix 1 and note the indicative budgets for 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- c) Approve the proposed 4.1% increase to dwelling rents, and delegate the setting of individual property rents, to the Director of Housing Operations and the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, in consultation with the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Executive Member for Housing and Employment.
- d) Approve the establishment of a £200,000 hardship fund to support vulnerable tenants, and to delegate the design and operation of the fund to the Director of Housing Operations and the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, in consultation with the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Executive Member for Housing and Employment.

- e) Approve the proposal that where the 2022/23 rent is not yet at the formula rent level, the rent is revised to the formula rent level when the property is re-let.
- f) Approve that communal heating charges are increased in line with the published % increase to the OFGEM price cap and delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer and City Solicitor in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Employment to approve the charges.
- g) Approve the proposed 2022/23 Operational Housing management costs as detailed in paragraphs 5.28 to 5.29.
- h) Approve the proposed increase in garage rental charges as outlined in paragraph 6.1

Wards Affected: Ancoats & Beswick, Charlestown, Cheetham, Crumpsall, Harphurhey, Higher Blackley, Moston, Ardwick, Clayton & Openshaw, Miles Platting Bradford and Miles Platting & Newton Heath and Piccadilly

Environmental Impact Assessment – the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city.
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As part of developing the HRA capital programme the retrofitting of existing homes to meet zero carbon objectives is at the heart of the programme.

Manchester Strategy Outcomes	Summary of the contribution to the strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	A healthy and fit for purpose affordable housing market will support a functioning local and sub regional economy.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Access to appropriate affordable housing and services will support residents to achieve and contribute to the city.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	The supply of affordable good quality homes will provide the opportunity for Manchester residents to raise their individual and collective aspirations.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit and work.	The right mix of affordable quality energy efficient housing is needed to support growth and ensure that our growing population can live and work in the City and enjoy a good quality of life.

A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Affordable social housing plays an important part in ensuring that there are neighbourhoods where people will choose to live, and their housing needs and aspirations are met.
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Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

All expenditure and income related to the provision of Council housing must be contained within the Housing Revenue Account which is a ring-fenced budget separate to the Council's General Fund. Whilst HRA expenditure can exceed income in any given year, this deficit must be covered from reserves and the HRA cannot go into deficit overall. The recommendations in this report will determine the financial plan for 2022/23 – 2024/25 and the impact on the overall financial model contained in the 30-year HRA business plan.

The HRA financial plan covers a rolling period of 30 years and considers all rental incomes, Private Finance Initiative (PFI) grants and heating charges, which must be used for the purpose of funding the costs of managing and maintaining HRA assets. The amount of income budgeted by the HRA in 2022/23 is forecast to be approximately £89m.

Financial Consequences – Capital

Within the proposed HRA budget a mandatory charge for depreciation is made, and this can be used to either fund capital expenditure or reduce housing debt. The 2022/23 HRA budget includes a forecast depreciation charge of £19m, which will be set aside to fund capital investment.

The assumptions on capital expenditure for the financial years 2022/23- 2024/25 are for expenditure (net of grants) approximately £100m. This includes schemes that will help the Council to become carbon neutral by 2038.

For the years 2023/24 and 2024/25, the figures used are based on the approved capital programme.

From 2025/26 onwards the HRA budget includes an annual capital budget of c£24m per annum which increases annually in line with CPI.

Officers are developing the asset management plan and this will inform the future capital programme and investment plan for our housing stock. This will need to address important issues including ensuring decent homes standards are achieved and maintained, and carbon reduction and fuel poverty are addressed.

The HRA capital budget already allows for the costs and implications of the following new build programmes: -

- Silk Street (69 properties) (2022-23 and 2023-24)
- Collyhurst (130 properties) (2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25)

The 30-year business plan factors in the income and costs associated with these new properties entering the portfolio once completed.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

None

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2022/23 budget and provide members with recommendations for approval in respect of the 2022/23 tenants' rent, garage rents and communal heating charges.
- 1.2 Due to the current economic climate and in particular the rate of inflation and the worldwide energy prices it is recognised that this could cause some difficulties for tenants. In order to provide hardship support, £200k funding has been identified to provide a fund to support vulnerable tenants, and the details will be developed in line with best practice and approved by the Director of Housing Operations and the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer prior to implementing the rent increase.
- 1.3 This report sets out the HRA budgetary proposals for 2022/23, and the indicative position for 2023/24 and 2024/25. Furthermore, it highlights the current use of reserves, along with the risks that need to be managed going forward.

2. Background

- 2.1 Since the introduction of Self Financing within the HRA from April 2012 the Council has had to manage its housing stock on a similar basis to other Registered Providers of social housing. This has entailed developing a rolling 30-year business plan and reviewing the use of existing assets to ensure that benefits are maximised.
- 2.2 In developing the 30-year business plan it is essential that the Council considers all risks and ensures that any investment decisions are affordable and sustainable both in the short and longer term.
- 2.3 In previous years there has been significant legislative change following the introduction of the Housing and Planning Act and Welfare Reform Act. In addition to this there have been policy changes that have affected the HRA budget, both in the short term, and in future years. In particular, the imposition of a 1% annual rent cut for four years from 1st April 2016 had a significant effect on available resources over the life of the business plan.
- 2.4 In February 2019, the Government released a policy statement on rents for social housing, which included a direction to the Regulator of Social Housing to have regard for the following when setting the rent standard for registered providers of social housing:

“From 1 April 2020, registered providers may not increase rents by more than CPI (at September of the previous year) plus one percentage point in any year.”

Indications are that the majority of Registered Providers (RPs) in the City are proposing to increase the 2022/23 rents in line with the above policy, and the City Council are seeking approval to increase in line with other RPs.

- 2.5 This report is seeking approval for the 2022/23 HRA budget, but as part of the work the longer term (30 year) HRA business plan has been prepared. It should be noted that the longer-term budget is based on forecasts and there are many variables that could impact upon the forecasts, in particular the level of future years rent increases.
- 2.6 The current business plan shows a healthy level of reserves currently, with the forecasts showing that reserves do not fall below the c£60m level required to avoid having to pay increased interest charges on debt until 2035/36 and will show a small surplus at the end of the 30-year period. However, the current plan does not include the majority of works required to enable the Council to achieve its zero carbon targets by 2038, and the costs of retrofitting council stock is estimated to be c.£255m or c£16.5k per property and will not be achievable from within the ringfenced housing account without government support and/or changes to the current HRA regulations.

3. Statutory Duties in Determining the HRA Budget Strategy

- 3.1 The rules governing the maintenance of the HRA were established pursuant to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and provide that:
 - The Council must formulate proposals in respect of HRA income and expenditure for the financial year which, on the best assumptions and estimates that the Council is able to make at the time, ensure that the HRA does not show a debit balance.
 - The Council is required to keep a HRA in accordance with proper practice. The Council has the responsibility to determine a strategy that is designed to ensure that the HRA is in balance taking one year with another.
 - The HRA continues to be a ring-fenced account, this means that it must, in general, balance on a year-to-year basis, so that the costs of running the Housing Service, which include debt charges, administration costs and maintenance expenditure must be met from HRA income.

4. Budget Position 2021/22

- 4.1 As at December 2021 the HRA is forecasting that net expenditure will be £11.621m lower than budget. Although the expenditure is lower than originally forecast, it is still more than the annual income and the forecast in-year deficit of £5.073m will be drawn down from the HRA reserve. The main reasons for in year changes are as follows:
 - Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO)- £10.754m underspend – due to slippage and delays on several capital investment schemes,

including major works at Silk Street and Collyhurst, and several planned schemes providing internal refurbishment to homes.

- Private Finance Initiatives - £1.496m underspend due to capital works installing sprinkler systems in Brunswick being moved into 2022-23.
- Operational Housing costs - £0.947m overspend largely due to a combination of increased council tax charges for void properties, energy costs, and repairs and maintenance.
- Contribution to Bad Debts - £0.530m underspend due to a better than forecast collection of rents and a corresponding reduction in the provision for bad debts.
- Other Income - £300k shortfall in income due to delayed income from the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) which will be received in 2022/23 in relation to solar panels, and rental income from offices following Northwards move back into the Council.
- Other minor underspends totalling £88k.

5. Budget Strategy 2022/23 - 2024/25

- 5.1 Whilst the HRA financial plan continues to be prepared on the same basis as previous years, it does consider all known changes to housing stock numbers, proposed investment needs and inflationary assumptions in line with the City Council's medium term financial plan. It also reflects the first full year of operation following the bringing back in house of Northwards Housing.
- 5.2 The HRA budget complies with the statutory requirement to be in balance over the three year budget strategy period, and over the course of the 30 year business plan. However, due to several factors, including the Government's imposed 1% rent reduction over four years from 2016/17 and the impact of the Grenfell Tower fire disaster, the HRA does not currently contain sufficient resources to meet the Council's ambition to become a zero carbon City by 2038. Costs are regularly reviewed in order that efficiencies can be identified to ensure that reserves are kept at a sufficient level to enable risk to be managed and resources to be available to fund future works required.

Management of Housing Stock and Implications of "Right to Buy"

- 5.3 The Council continues to own and manage approximately 15,400 properties within the HRA under various arrangements. Since July 2021 stock previously managed by Northwards Housing has been brought back under the control of the Council, and this is now managed by Operational Housing within The Neighbourhoods Directorate.
- 5.4 Management of the remainder of the stock includes three PFI schemes, and two smaller arrangements with other Registered Providers (RPs).

- 5.5 In the 2021/22 financial year Right to Buy Sales (RTB) have remained at a reduced level due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and sales of around 138 properties are being forecast. This is less than the number sold in 2019/20 (191 properties sold, 1.22% of stock), and it is assumed that the number of sales will return to a similar level (1.25%) for the next five years of the Business Plan, before dropping back to 1% for the remaining years of the plan. This will reduce the level of rent income achieved and the number of sales will continue to be closely monitored.
- 5.6 The table at Appendix 1 provides a detailed analysis of the overall proposed 2022/23 budget which is forecasting an in-year deficit of £12.376m. This is due mainly to an increase in the capital investment plans (£33m), due to a combination of works brought forward from previous years, and new schemes such as Silk Street and Collyhurst Village.

Budget Assumptions

Rental Income

- 5.7 Government guidance allows Local Authorities to increase rents by a maximum of CPI plus 1% for the five-year period 2020/21 to 2024/25. The CPI rate used is based on the September figure in the preceding year, and as at September 2021 CPI was 3.1% and therefore this report seeks approval to increase tenants' rents for all properties will increase by 4.1% in April 2021.
- 5.8 In light of the current economic climate and the potential impact the proposed 4.1% rent increase may have on the most vulnerable tenants it is proposed that £200k is earmarked to provide a hardship fund to provide targeted support to those most affected by the increase in living costs, the proposed rent increase and the ongoing impacts of Covid-19. The proposed scheme detail including application process will be developed in line with best practice across the sector and with support from the Head of Corporate assessments who has responsibility for the delivery of the council welfare support schemes. It is proposed that the scheme will be in operation from April 2022 prior to the rent increase coming into effect.
- 5.9 In addition to the hardship fund it should be noted that the proposed 4.1% rent increase will be covered in full for those residents in receipt of 100% housing benefit entitlement which is approximately 2,800 tenants and a further c.1,900 tenants receiving partial housing benefit support. Those in receipt of universal credit will also be partially protected from the impact, although the numbers in receipt on universal credit is not known.
- 5.10 For those properties where formula rent has not been achieved (app 1,000 properties), if the property becomes vacant the rent can then be increased to formula rent when the property is re-let.
- 5.11 The budget has been prepared on this basis and would produce an average weekly rent (based on 52 weeks) of:

- General Needs £78.45 (£3.09 increase)
- Supported Housing £71.45 (£2.81 increase)
- PFI Managed £93.85 (£3.70 increase)

Other Income

5.12 Other income is forecast to be c.£0.975m in 2022/23, and this is made up as follows:

- Non-Dwelling Rents and Other Income includes:
 - Non-Dwelling Rents – income from garage rents, rental income from shops and offices, ground rent and telecoms masts
 - Other Income and Contributions – Contributions towards grounds maintenance and solar panel income.
- Recharge to Homelessness – rental income in relation to HRA properties used by Homelessness (273 flats/rooms, total income £215k)
- HRA Investment Income – the HRA receives income on balances held within the Council's bank account
- Income from Leaseholders (e.g., contribution to heating, cleaning, and repairs to communal areas)

Private Finance Initiative

- 5.13 This budget proposes to continue to charge PFI rents in line with the original rent policy, that is CPI +1%.
- 5.14 “Smoothing” reserve funds had been established for all the PFI contracts, these are set up to smooth the costs of the PFI over the duration of the scheme. Following the introduction of self-financing and the removal of the subsidy system, PFI rental income and grant can be used to fund the annual unitary charge, which removed the ongoing requirement to contribute towards a smoothing reserve. The current PFI reserve will continue to remain frozen at £10m as at 31 March 2022 and will be used to part fund the outstanding HRA debt.
- 5.15 Additional funding of c£4m has been included in the budget to cover the cost of sprinkler installation in high rise properties managed under PFI agreements, along with lifecycle costs.

Communal Heating

- 5.16 In general, it is intended that gas charges are set to reflect the actual cost of gas consumed. However, there are reasons why in practice this is difficult to achieve:
- Charges are set based on anticipated charges for the following year and consumption from the previous year
 - Some of the heating systems are not efficient in operation – work is ongoing to improve these.

- 5.17 Communal heating gas is sourced as part of the City Council overall gas contract and this is up for renewal in April 2022 and although there is no confirmation of the actual increase, what is known is that the increase is going to be significant. The global gas market has seen unprecedented rises this year, with prices currently around 500% to 600% more expensive than the current contract, and it remains volatile with significant swings daily. Officers are continuing to monitor the markets to get the most economically advantageous contract for the Council, but this has not yet been agreed. There is currently no indication of when energy markets will settle, but any future price is likely to be significantly higher than the current contract.
- 5.18 The dramatic increase in the cost of wholesale gas has caused energy prices to soar across the country, and around 27 energy companies have gone into administration. In the absence of the details of the actual increase in gas costs and to provide tenants with an element of price protection it is proposed that heating prices will be increased in line with the percentage increase to the Ofgem energy price cap which is due to be published in February 2022. Whilst this is anticipated to be a large increase it is expected that there will be some form of support scheme made available to energy users, and officers will support tenants in accessing any support made available. As an indication of the potential impact on heating charges Appendix B includes details of price increases at both 20% and 50%. The actual tenants increase will only be known once the Ofgem Price Cap increase is published.
- 5.19 Once the gas contract has been agreed more work will be undertaken to assess both the level of charges required to cover costs, and ways in which the impact on tenants can be mitigated
- 5.20 The gas supply to the 2-4 bed blocks are part of a separate contract, and the price has also not been agreed. However, the number of properties affected is currently c100 and reducing as individual boilers are installed, therefore it is proposed that the same increase in tariff is assumed.
- 5.21 As part of the Councils Zero Carbon commitment work is continuing to source additional external funding for works, and there continues to be a programme of capital investment that looks to both improve energy efficiency of homes and reduce carbon. This will include c£2m to install new boilers or heat pumps.

Depreciation

- 5.22 Depreciation is a means of charging the cost of an asset to the revenue account over its remaining useful life. In accordance with accounting regulations, it is charged to the HRA as a transfer to Reserves where it can be used to fund capital expenditure or pay off debt. The depreciation charge in 2022/23 is forecast to be £19m and this will be used to fund the proposed capital investment programme.

Debt Financing and Borrowing Costs

- 5.23 The 2022/23 opening HRA debt is anticipated to remain unchanged at £121.26m, and this is funded through a combination of market loans and internal funding through the use of reserves. Using internal funds, provides the benefit of reducing the interest costs of borrowing, but it is important that any future investment decisions are carefully considered because if the reserves fall below the level of internally funded debt, then interest charges will increase. This will be considered as part of any investment proposals that require use of the HRA reserves if the scheme appraisal would need to ensure that the increased costs of borrowing are factored into the project costs.
- 5.24 Following the removal of Councils' HRA debt caps, which means that there is no upper limit to the absolute level of debt that can be held, the only restriction being that the HRA business plan must demonstrate that any debt can be serviced without the HRA going into deficit.
- 5.25 The HRA is making provision only for the interest repayments in relation to the outstanding debt. Consideration will need to be given to refinancing the debts as and when the debts become repayable this will be considered as part of the treasury management strategy.

Provision for Bad Debts

- 5.26 Whilst the roll out of Universal Credit and the pandemic have had an impact on tenants' ability to pay, due to the ongoing good work with residents the level of bad debts has been lower than originally forecast. Therefore, the business plan has been adjusted for 2022/23 onwards. The forecast provision for bad debts in 2021/22 is around 0.65% of rental income, and so the ongoing forecast requirement is 1% for the life of the plan, this is a 0.5% reduction from the previous assumption in the business plan. This is still considered a prudent approach based on the current year's performance, although the impact on households over the coming year from general inflation is currently unknown. The collection rates and levels of bad debts will be kept under review.

Operational Housing - Stock Management Fee

- 5.27 A major element of the business case that underpinned the transfer of management of stock in North Manchester back to the Council was the savings in management costs that would arise. These, along with one off costs associated with the transfer, have been factored into the business plan, and these are shown below:

	2022-23 £000	2023-24 £000	2024-25 £000	2025-26 £000
Costs:				
Campbell Tickell Report (Legal, restructuring and management of change)	1,353			
Reduction based on additional costs to date	-200			
	1,153	0	0	0

Savings:				
Operational Savings via Transformational Change	-1,532	-1,639	-1,754	-1,877
Management Savings via Transformational Change	-273	-292	-312	-334
Management Roles	-256	-269	-282	-296
Roles Absorbed into MCC and Governance Savings	-336	-353	-370	-389
Total Saving	-1,244	-2,553	-2,719	-2,896

- 5.28 The management fee shown in the business plan includes assumed increases for energy costs and annual pay increases for 2021/22 (still to be agreed) and a forecast for 2022/23. The amounts paid will be adjusted to reflect differences between the actual increases and the assumptions.
- 5.29 The new repairs and maintenance contract was let to Equans with effect from March 2021, current years costs are forecast to be c£12m, this includes elements of one-off costs in respect of initial mobilisation costs, the budget for 2022/23 is c£11.1m.

Other Expenditure

- 5.30 Details of other expenditure is detailed in appendix 1 and covers:
- Retained Stock Maintenance & Repairs – this covers repairs to offices, environmental works, and some lift maintenance
 - Supervision & Management – this covers the City Council costs of managing the HRA, including the cost of staff in Strategic Housing (HRA related), corporate, central, and departmental recharges, and other miscellaneous costs.
 - Other management arrangements – stock management fee to the two Tenant Management Organisations (419 properties), Guinness Partnership (171 properties in West Gorton) and Peaks and Plains (11 properties in Alderley Edge)
 - Council Tax – on properties held empty
 - Insurance costs – The annual contribution to the HRA insurance reserve
 - Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay – this is where funds held within the HRA are set aside to contribute towards the cost of capital works (in addition to Depreciation).

Inflation Assumptions

- 5.31 The HRA budget includes inflation assumptions in line with the Council's current assumptions in relation to pay and prices. Most of the inflation in the business plan is linked to the consumer price index rate (CPI), which have increased sharply lately. Based on an assessment of forecasts available, CPI has been forecast to peak at around c.6% by April 2022, and then fall back to c4% in the second half of 2022. CPI for the rent increase for 2023-24 has

been assumed to be 3% as it is based on CPI in September 2022, and this will be retained under review. Thereafter, the business plan assumes a 2% CPI rate for the remainder of the plan.

- 5.32 This inflationary increase will only be applied to costs that are not already known, currently the rent income, the PFI unitary charges, and the Operational Housing management costs are known for 2022/23, so the 2% will only apply to a small proportion of the HRA costs.

6. Garage Rents

- 6.1 It is proposed that 2022/23 garage rents increase by 4.1% in line with the proposed increase for dwelling rents, and the impact of the increase is shown in the table below:

	Annual Charge 2021/22	Weekly Charge 2021/22	Proposed Weekly Charge 2022/23	Proposed Weekly Increase
Site Only	£102.96	£1.98	£2.06	£0.08
Prefabricated	£228.28	£4.39	£4.57	£0.18
Brick Built	£268.32	£5.16	£5.37	£0.21

7. Reserves Forecast

- 7.1 Current projections show that although the HRA maintains a positive balance of reserves throughout the life of the business plan, the significant costs of undertaking all the required carbon retrofitting works are not yet included in the business plan. The costs of this work are estimated to be around c£16.5k per property, and this will inevitably require additional external resources in order to ensure all works can be undertaken. The table below sets out details of the anticipated HRA reserves position over the next three years if there are no additional investment proposals above the approved amounts included for RCCO and the contribution towards Brunswick capital costs. Given the low interest rate payable on balances, the HRA is currently using around £60m of its own reserves to internally fund part of the HRA debt rather than take out external borrowing. This provides annual interest savings of around £2.4m per annum. The continuation of this arrangement will need to be considered if any investment proposals are to be funded by the use of reserves.

Reserves Forecast 2022/22 to 2024/25

- 7.2 The table below sets out the forecast reserves position for 2021/22 and the next three years. Based on the December forecast position the HRA closing reserves are forecast to be £109.612m, but these are forecast to reduce by c£11m 2022/23 and further reductions in the following two years. The reduction in reserves relates to the ongoing capital investment proposals.

Reserve Description	2021/22 (Forecast) £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
General Reserve (including Major Repairs reserve)	75,612	63,469	55,766	42,910
Residual Liabilities Fund	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000
PFI Reserve	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Total Reserves	109,612	97,469	89,766	76,910

Insurance Reserve	2,369	2,569	2,769	2,969
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7.3 The Residual Liabilities Fund was established to cover any potential environmental and other risks associated with the large and small scale voluntary transfers that have taken place during the past 15 years. There is no reason to change the level of reserve from that recommended in an independent report previously commissioned, and therefore the fund balance will be held at £24m for 2022/23.

7.4 Within the general reserve there is also a separately held HRA Insurance Reserve. This is required to ensure compliance with the ringfencing requirements. The balance required is determined by the likely liabilities arising from claims settled in any one year, there is an annual contribution to the reserve assumed within the current proposed HRA budget.

8. Conclusions

8.1 The proposals contained in this report seek to ensure that the HRA business plan provides a sound basis of managing the existing stock, whilst also identifying the potential risks that need to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

8.2 The budget proposals will allow for continued service delivery and investment within the existing stock and development of new HRA stock within the confines of the available resources.

8.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Authority must ensure that the HRA does not result in a debit balance. The proposed budget for 2022/23, together with the indicative budget for the following two years, is attached at Appendix 1 and shows this provision being met (before proposed use of reserves to fund capital works).

8.4 The HRA continues to hold a prudent level of reserves that enables continued savings on HRA costs through self-funding part of the HRA debt. There is also an increase in the planned level of capital works over the 2-year period 2022/23 – 2023/24 that is partly funded from the existing HRA reserves.

8.5 Based on forecasts, over the next three years the HRA can continue to fund existing debts, together with the ongoing management and maintenance costs whilst also maintaining a positive reserves position. The reserves provide longer term benefits to the HRA through debt financing, reducing the overall

interest payable, and contributing towards increased resources available for further investment in the longer term.

9. Key Policies and Considerations

(a) Equal Opportunities

The rents have been set in line with the Government's guideline rent.

(b) Risk Management

Under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Authority must ensure that the Housing Revenue Account does not result in a debit balance. The proposed change in rents and identification of savings within this report, together with regular budget monitoring will assist in managing this risk over the short term. Work will continue to ensure that the HRA remains viable in the longer term.

(c) Legal Considerations

The City Solicitor has reviewed this report and is satisfied that any legal considerations have been incorporated within the body of the report.

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Appendix 1

Housing Revenue Account Budget 2021/22 – 2024/25

	2021/22 (Forecast) £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	See Para.
Income					
Housing Rents	(61,646)	(63,713)	(65,807)	(67,120)	5.7
Heating Income	(533)	(681)	(771)	(861)	5.16
PFI Credit	(23,374)	(23,374)	(23,374)	(23,374)	5.13
Other Income	(932)	(975)	(958)	(952)	5.12
Funding from General HRA Reserve	(5,073)	(12,576)	(7,703)	(12,856)	7.1
Total Income	(91,558)	(101,319)	(98,612)	(105,163)	
Expenditure					
Operational Housing Management	14,327	12,845	11,817	11,938	5.27
Operational Housing - R&M	12,035	11,193	11,417	11,645	5.29
PFI Contractor Payments	30,980	32,573	34,410	34,326	5.13
Communal Heating	533	1,019	1,044	1,065	5.16
Supervision and Management	5,296	5,229	5,208	5,277	5.30
Contribution to Bad Debts	400	640	661	674	5.26
Hardship Fund	0	200	0	0	5.8
Depreciation	18,435	18,991	19,359	19,567	5.22
Other Expenditure	1,302	1,391	1,416	1,439	5.30
RCCO	5,487	14,508	10,577	16,537	5.30
Interest Payable and similar charges	2,763	2,730	2,702	2,695	5.23
Total Expenditure	91,558	101,319	98,611	105,163	
Total Reserves (exc. Insurance):					
Opening Balance	(115,118)	(110,045)	(97,469)	(89,766)	7.1
Funding (from)/to Revenue	5,073	12,576	7,703	12,856	
Closing Balance	(110,045)	(97,469)	(89,766)	(76,910)	

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Appendix 2**Proposed Heating Tariffs**

The table below shows the implications for 2022/23 heating charges after applying increases of 0%, 20% and 50%. The point of sale customers purchase units of heat via their top up card, whilst the tenants who pay by their rent pay a set weekly fee for their heat and the overall usage is taken into account when calculating future years' charges.

Pay by Rents

Property Type	Area/Scheme	Current Charge per week (2021/22)	Charge if no change in Gas Price	Charge if 20% increase in Gas price	Charge if 50% increase in Gas price
Flat 1 Bed	Grove Village Tenants	£6.49	£5.67	£6.80	£8.50
House 2 Bed	Grove Village Tenants	£8.02	£7.00	£8.40	£10.51
House 3 Bed	Grove Village Tenants	£10.13	£8.85	£10.62	£13.27
House 4 Bed	Grove Village Tenants	£11.69	£10.21	£12.25	£15.31
Flat 1 Bed	Northwards Sheltered - Boiler Supply	£5.09	£5.80	£6.96	£8.70
Flat 2 Bed	Northwards Sheltered - Boiler Supply	£6.18	£7.04	£8.45	£10.56
Flat 1 Bed	Northwards Sheltered - Other supply	£5.09	£0.00	£6.96	£8.70
Flat 2 Bed	Northwards Sheltered - Other supply	£6.18	£0.00	£8.45	£10.56
2/4 Block	Northwards 2/4 Blocks - All Others	£5.67	£5.63	£6.75	£8.44
2/4 Block - Fuel	Northwards 2/4 Blocks - Fuel Supplement	£0.49	£0.48	£0.58	£0.72
Multistorey Flat	Northwards - Multistorey - Sandyhill	£5.25	£5.84	£7.01	£8.76
Type A	Northwards - Victoria Square	£5.48	£5.52	£6.63	£8.29
Type B	Northwards - Victoria Square	£5.89	£5.94	£7.13	£8.91
Type C	Northwards - Victoria Square	£6.33	£6.39	£7.67	£9.58
Type D	Northwards - Victoria Square	£6.58	£6.64	£7.96	£9.95
Type E	Northwards - Victoria Square	£8.43	£8.50	£10.20	£12.75
Caretaker	Northwards - Victoria Square	£10.10	£10.18	£12.22	£15.28
Flat 1 Bed	Brunswick Sheltered (removed)	£5.09	£0.00	£6.96	£8.70
Flat 2 Bed	Brunswick Sheltered (removed)	£6.18	£0.00	£8.45	£10.56

Pay by Point of Sale

Scheme	Current Charge per heat unit in pence (2021/22)	Charge per unit in pence if no change in Gas Price	Charge per unit in pence if 20% increase in Gas price	Charge per unit in pence if 50% increase in Gas price
Grove Village	5.01	4.38	5.25	6.56
MECO	7.63	7.30	8.76	10.95
Northwards 2/4 Blocks	9.76	9.76	9.76	9.76
Northwards Multistorey	7.18	6.88	8.25	10.32
Victoria Avenue	5.29	3.13	3.75	4.69
Brunswick Multistorey & Polygon & Extra Care	9.76	11.02	13.22	16.53

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Resource and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 8 February 2022

Subject: Strategic Communications three year strategy and service priorities

Report of: Head of Strategic Communications

Summary

This report provides an update on the Council's three year communications strategy, to be adopted from April 2022.

It also includes the communications priorities for 2022/23, the social media strategy implemented in 2021, and an example of the monthly evaluation template referenced in the report.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to note and comment on the reports.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

The work of the team contributes positively to the city's zero carbon work.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The work of the team is driven by the OM strategy and the corporate priorities of the council. The campaigns and communications activities included within the plan are designed to support the delivery of these outcomes, by raising awareness, increasing engagement or influencing behaviours
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	

A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

Contact Officer:

Name: Alun Ireland

Position: Head of Strategic Communications

Telephone: 07971 385049

E-mail: alun.ireland@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection): None

Introduction

- 1.1 The strategic communications service had a three year plan in place until March 2020, and at that time – given the early response to Covid – the service moved to planning for one year only. That was repeated in 2021 with the focus on the response to the pandemic.
- 1.2 However, it is now appropriate to move back to a three-year planning cycle to allow strategic delivery of communications, better planning and to develop the service in line with changing needs.
- 1.3 Meaningful communications plays an important role in everything we do as a council, is the responsibility of everyone and is critical to delivery of the council's role in the community. Our Communications Strategy sets out how we communicate with our local residents and stakeholders. The principal purpose of the Communications Strategy is to support the council's refreshed Corporate Plan, which sets out how we will help make the Our Manchester vision for 2025 a reality.
- 1.4 The three year time frame allows us to plan service delivery in line with budgets, training and development needs, service subscriptions and to take a longer term view of contracts.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Strategic Communications covers a range of services which are far broader than functions traditionally associated with council communications.
- 2.2 The service is structured into two areas - **Content and Strategy** and **Operations and Commercial**.

Content and Strategy plans and develops the strategy for communications activity, drawing out the key messages and shaping the tactics to get the messages to the relevant audiences. They then bring the story to life by providing creative treatments, designing web pages and content presentation/ user journeys. The following services are provided:

- Strategic marketing, account management, insight, research (with assistance from PRI), channel planning, media buying and digital communications
- Press office - promotes the Council via proactive PR, protects its reputation and responds to media inquiries, major events supporting communications (marketing and digital)
- Internal communications – intranet, staff communication and engagement
- Creative design – crafting the look and feel of the messages and campaigns through all mediums based on the target audience
- Digital - creating effective web content that supports residents to access services and information

Operations and Commercial delivers the operational functions for communications - print, mail, distribution and supporting residents with interpretations and translations and supporting events with technical delivery. This team also identifies opportunities to commercialise our operations. The following services are provided:

- Print and mail services – this also includes delivery of the digitisation of operational services, such as hybrid mail and management of the local print infrastructure
- Translations and interpretation services
- Presentation and technical AV services
- Commercial relationship management

- 2.3 The Content and Strategy team works within an annual work programme of communications and marketing campaigns that link directly to the service and council's business objectives and help protect and improve the council's reputation.

The work plan is developed by marketing/communications specialists working with service managers ensuring the council's strategic aims and services objectives are reflected in all communications activity.

There is a clear line of sight of all work coming into the team that can be prioritised by managers on an ongoing basis and resource is used as flexibly as possible to deliver the priorities and projects emerging.

Equalities runs throughout all activity, ensuring inclusion is a key part of service planning. This applies to how we develop and share messaging, the channels and networks we use, and how we listen to feedback.

Similarly, we aim for zero carbon messaging to run through all our communications planning so it is not just focussed around green or environmental messages.

The broad scope of the team's work is as follows:

- **Priority 1** campaigns are those that will have the biggest impact on council reputation and are vital to the delivery of one of our agreed priorities.
- **Priority 2** campaigns are closely aligned to priorities but have a lesser impact on the reputation of the organisation.
- **Priority 3** activity includes smaller campaigns - either aimed at smaller audiences or supporting time limited activity or events.

The Service Priorities document is attached at Appendix 2.

- 2.4 The service has significant income generation targets across services. This is used to fund the service and staffing.

Since 2011/12, there has been overall savings of £1.225m. Since 2016/17 budgets have been fairly stable until the £300k savings in 2021/22.

- 2.5 Service priorities, principles, structure and channel planning are set out in the Communications Strategy 2022-25 at Appendix 1.
- 2.6 Key areas of focus in the last two years have been development of an evaluation framework and the development of a council-wide social media strategy, to support training, evaluation and to demonstrate value for money.
- 2.7 The Social Media Strategy and the evaluation document for December are attached at Appendix 3 and Appendix 4.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to comment on and note the reports.

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COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2022-2025



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Context

Manchester City Council had a three-year communications strategy in place until March 2020.

At that point, given the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic and the work across the council to respond, the decision was taken to have a Covid-19 focussed communications plan that would align with the council response.

However, it is now appropriate to move back to a three-year planning cycle to allow strategic delivery of communications, better planning and to develop the service in line with changing needs.

Meaningful communications plays an important role in everything we do as a council and is the responsibility of everyone and is critical to delivery of the council's role in the community.

Our Communications Strategy sets out how we communicate with our local residents and stakeholders. The principal purpose of the Communications Strategy is to support the council's refreshed Corporate Plan, which sets out how we will help make the Our Manchester vision for 2025 a reality.

The Our Manchester Strategy's five main themes are to make Manchester:

- **Thriving and Sustainable** – vibrant with a cutting-edge economy involving and fairly rewarding all our people.
- **Highly Skilled** – work-ready, well-educated young people and all residents supported to take up opportunities.
- **Progressive and Equitable** – so all can thrive, with better joined-up support, care and health services.
- **Liveable and Zero-Carbon** – safe, enjoyable neighbourhoods with affordable housing, zero-carbon by 2038 using green growth and design, energy, and more climate-resilience.
- **Connected** – more walking, cycling and green transport, and accessible digital technology used by and working for everyone.

Our nine Corporate Priorities reflect what we – as a council – need to do and focus on to deliver the Our Manchester vision. Equality, inclusion and sustainability is at the heart of everything we do along with a renewed focus on young people, our economy, health, housing, our environment and infrastructure.

All communications activities must demonstrably promote work carried out to achieve the objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan.

The nine priorities are:

1. Zero carbon Manchester
2. Growth that benefits everyone
3. Young people
4. Healthy, cared-for people

5. Housing
6. Neighbourhoods
7. Connections
8. Equality
9. Well-managed council

Strategic Communications team and mission statement

Mission Statement

To support and enhance the reputation of the Council, through effective strategic communications, professional executive support for the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team (SMT), the leadership and successful events and programmes. Building trust and confidence that strengthens relationships with citizens, stakeholders, our staff and promotes the city and the Council.

Communications core objectives

- To develop a communications function that supports Council priorities based on an engagement model of communications - not traditional marketing
- To deliver communications that recognise Manchester's diverse audiences, targeted to their needs and preferences rather than blanket activity
- To develop communications that use and recognise the tools and voices available to us - listening and working with others, particularly supporting staff with the tools to act as advocates for the Council and city
- To lead the council's approach to accessibility, demonstrating best practice and ensuring compliance across the organisation
- To develop the Communications Service further as a centre of excellence that:
 - Protects and enhances the reputation of the Council and city
 - Supports council-wide priorities first
 - Is seen as a market leader in the delivery of strategic and operational communications
 - Delivers where appropriate through strong partnerships
- Ensure that all activity recognises Manchester's diverse communities, whether that's targeted communications activity or bespoke civic events and engagements

Team structure

The service is structured into two areas - **Content and Strategy** and **Operations and Commercial**.

Content and Strategy plans and develops the strategy for communications activity, drawing out the key messages and shaping the tactics to get the messages to the relevant audiences. They then bring the story to life by providing creative treatments, designing web pages and content presentation/ user journeys. The following services are provided:

- Strategic marketing, account management, insight, research (with assistance from PRI), channel planning, media buying and digital communications
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- Creative design – crafting the look and feel of the messages and campaigns through all mediums based on the target audience

- Digital - creating effective web content that supports residents to access services and information

Operations and Commercial delivers the operational functions for communications - print, mail, distribution and supporting residents with interpretations and translations and supporting events with technical delivery. This team also identifies opportunities to commercialise our operations. The following services are provided:

- Print and mail services – apart from the obvious this also includes delivery of the digitisation of operational services, such as hybrid mail and management of the local print infrastructure
- Translations and interpretation services
- Presentation and technical AV services
- Commercial relationship management

Work Plan

The Content and Strategy team works within an annual work programme of communications and marketing campaigns that link directly to the service and council's business objectives and help protect and improve the council's reputation.

The work plan is developed by marketing/communications specialists working with service managers ensuring the council's strategic aims and services objectives are reflected in all communications activity.

There is a clear line of sight of all work coming into the team that can be prioritised by managers on an ongoing basis and resource is used as flexibly as possible to deliver the priorities and projects emerging.

Equalities runs throughout all activity, ensuring inclusion is a key part of service planning. This applies to how we develop and share messaging, the channels and networks we use, and how we listen to feedback.

The broad scope of the team's work is as follows:

- **Priority 1** campaigns are those that will have the biggest impact on council reputation and are vital to the delivery of one of our agreed priorities.
- **Priority 2** campaigns are closely aligned to priorities but have a lesser impact on the reputation of the organisation.
- **Priority 3** activity includes smaller campaigns - either aimed at smaller audiences or supporting time limited activity or events.

The service has significant income generation targets covering posts and revenue spending.

Since 2011/12, there has been overall savings of £1.225m. Since 2016/17 budgets have been fairly stable until the £300k savings in 2021/22.

Core principles

The underlying principle of all communications in the council, for all audiences, is that there must be two-way communications with meaningful opportunities for the audiences to respond and the council to listen.

This is in line with the Our Manchester Strategy which is committed to building a fairer city for everyone who lives, works, volunteers, studies or plays here.

There is a consistent and strategic approach to communications across the council, using best practice. The following core principles complement the above and underpin the communications strategy:

- **Values** – to be credible, the Our Manchester values must be reflected in our communications, both in their visual style and in the way we deliver our messages.
- **Clear, consistent and honest** - ensuring communications is in language that is free from jargon and easy to understand. Where technical terms are needed, we will fully explain them.
- **Open and transparent** – making information as widely available as possible. All residents and stakeholders should be able to easily find relevant information about the council and how it is making a difference to their quality of life, in turn enabling them to better understand, assess and contribute to our work.
- **Targeted, relevant and timely** – recognising the need to need to tailor communications for and targeting specific audiences.
- **Accessible** - communications should be accessible for all, reflecting the diverse needs and preferences of our audiences.
- **Digital first** - In line with the council's digital transformation, and the work of the Future Shape programme, the team has for some time been working to a principle of digital first. This not only increases efficiency and reduces costs but is also more environmentally friendly. However, a range of communications methods are deployed to reach all our audiences, including those with limited or no digital access.
- **Collaboration** – building on the city's strong history of partnership working, we utilise both formal and informal partnerships to maximise and improve engagement with all our residents and communities. By working together and finding creative solutions we can create understanding and tackle inequalities.
- **Insight led** - effectively using previous evaluations, industry best practice, behavioural science and intelligence so that communications and engagement activity and the wider council resources can be effectively targeted and subsequently evaluated.

Audiences and stakeholders

While this is not an exhaustive list, key groups we will communicate with on various matters include the following. This will be through direct contact or via networks and third parties to reach relevant groups:

- Residents
- Businesses
- Our own workforce
- Elected members
- Sector partner organisations including MHCC, MFT, GMCA, MLCO, Growth Company, Marketing Manchester, TfGM and their networks
- Voluntary sector organisations
- Community groups (formal and informal) including resident groups (by location, practice, interest etc)
- Business networks (FSB, CityCo, Chamber of Commerce)
- Social networks
- MPs and national government as appropriate
- Local, regional, trade and national media

- Core Cities and the LGA
- Partners including regeneration partners, investors

Channels Overview

The Council has access to a wide range of channels. These can be free channels that we own or partner channels that will promote, influence and amplify our messages.

We will also use paid media channels and supplier channels as necessary. We do all of this so we can successfully reach/target and engage the identified audiences for our campaigns, projects and service updates. Supporting our objectives and delivering outcomes.

Channels and audiences – examples

Note: this is not an exhaustive list but highlights of some of the channels we are able to work with and regularly use.

MCC Channels

E-bulletins - Gov Delivery

MCC owned ebulletin service - direct digital comms to active subscribers focusing on key council campaigns

Used for all key council lead campaigns and key comms to residents – news, recycling/bin changes, community events, Elections

Corporate social media accounts

MCC has a substantial social media presence

Facebook - 100k Followers

Twitter - 195k Followers

Instagram - 18.5k Followers

Linked In - 31k Followers

Used for all key council lead campaigns, key comms to residents, events, culture, council meetings and initiatives, as well as amplifying content from partner channels where appropriate.

Also used reactively to distribute current events and real time messages for residents.

Community Facebook groups

For targeted messages to known Community Facebook groups when needed e.g. Covid updates and flood warnings and events or access to support.

MCC service owned social media accounts

In addition to the Corporate social media accounts there are accounts that are managed by MCC services, such as Neighbourhood teams, these accounts will share and promote priority campaigns and messages along with local content that is relevant or specific to their service areas.

MCC Services

We work with many of our services as they are a channel to engage our residents and businesses such as Libraries, Work and Skills, Neighbourhood Teams.

Partners

As a council we work closely with a variety of partners across Manchester and Greater Manchester.

Partners include: Health colleagues MHCC and the GMHSC Partnership, GMP, TfGM, the GMCA, MACC, LGBT Foundation, Visit Manchester, Recycle for Greater Manchester and more.

We work closely with businesses and charitable organisations in the city.

This joined up approach help us target even further and access audiences we may not be able to get to on our own.

Paid Media

Out of home/Outdoor

Digital screens

Large format digital screens across MCC council area.

Main suppliers Ocean, JC Decaux, Global, Clear channel.

Used for Flagship and high-profile campaigns and events e.g. Manchester Day, Zero Carbon, Fostering

City wide audience. All demographics.

Manchester City Council has access to an allocation of space free of charge on many of these sites e.g. Ocean city centre digital screens. As well as the new JC Decaux large format screens that have recently been installed across the city.

Large Format print sites

Multiple print sites across MCC council area

Formats - 6 sheets, 48 sheets, bus stop advertising.

Main companies are Clear Channel and JC Decaux.

Used for flagship and high-profile campaigns and events – e.g. Recycling, Festival of Manchester, Covid

City wide audience. All demographics. Plus, site specific options for location targeting.

Telephone kiosk advertising

External advertising on kiosks across MCC Council ward areas.

Offers an option for outdoor media at a lower cost.

Sites are owned by Global.

Targeted to district level and across MCC high and mid-level campaigns – e.g. MAES, Student Safety, Leisure activities

Audience can be geo targeted with these adverts - South Manchester for example (dependent on number of sites in an area)

Digital ad vans

Large mobile digital screens – that can carry multiple artwork and messaging. With the ability to move around ward areas and target high footfall sites.

Used for high profile campaigns. But budget cost can allow for mid-level campaigns where necessary – e.g. Covid, Thank you Weekend

Audience – Capable of high-level Geo targeting - we can map routes and areas in any of our wards for this activity. And also rotate creative and react to current issues.

Print Media**MEN**

Largest focused print media supplier in Manchester area.

They offer print media and digital advertising packages to cover our full council area.

Used for multi-level campaigns and events. Budget can be set accordingly to the level of each campaign -Universal Credit, Budget/Consultations, Christmas Markets

Key MCC audience footprint.

Digital targeting available to ward level and key demographic audiences - Families, Community, etc.

Also, possible to target on theme and relevance of a campaign - relevant ads placed in context with editorial

Targeted print media

The use of specific publications based on demographic and/or location - e.g.:

Asian Times - Southern Asian audience

Your voice - South Manchester community

Primary Times - Families and parents

Used for key audience-based campaigns - Covid, All sorts to do, Budget/consultations

Audience footprint for these publications can range from GM to North West audience (except for localised South Manchester publications)

Radio**Traditional Radio**

Advertising packages available for 30 second audio adverts across key stations in our council area.

Global and Bauer are the main leaders in the market

Bauer - Hits Radio (plus sub stations)

Global - Capital FM, Heart FM

Used for high profile campaigns, due to substantial budget needed – e.g. Manchester Day, Christmas Markets

Audience - Station footprints are GM and North west.

Digital Radio

Digital radio offers geographical and demographical targeting of digital adverts, across the suppliers network.

The adverts are distributed across mobile and smart devices - Echo, Google, ETC.
Bauer and Global have their own platforms that cover their own stations (plus independents)

Used for high to mid profile campaigns. Budget needs are lower than traditional radio as adverts are bought on an impression basis - Elections, Universal Credit

Audience - Geographical targeting to a Manchester footprint. Plus, some layering available depending on data sets - Families, Age ranges, Devices"

Hyper Local radio

Independent local radio stations in our area.

30 second radio adverts and live read and editorial packages can be arranged with these local providers

Used for local resident campaigns - relevant to localised audience and demographic – e.g. Covid, Domestic Abuse, Hate Crime

Stations in our area are:

North Manchester FM

All FM – covers South Manchester – Local to Longsight, Levenshulme, Gorton, Rusholme
Wythenshawe FM

Digital Media

Google display ads

Targeted digital display advertising across Google search and advertising network

Used for high profile campaigns in the main, as significant budget is needed – e.g. Register to vote, Christmas Markets, Foster Care

Audience - Multiple geographical and demographic targeting available, such as families, search footprint, mirrored social status

Facebook/Instagram

Paid activity across Facebook and Instagram's platform. Multiple artwork and messaging options, with direct link to web content and further action.

Used on campaigns at all levels, budget can be set accordingly – e.g. Markets, Our Manchester, Be proud

Audience - Geo targeting is excellent and can be drilled down to ward areas.
Demographic targeting Age, Parents, Interests - multiple options to create audience profiles."

Digital Mobile advertising

Targeted mobile display advertising - audience and behaviour lead options.

Used on campaigns at all levels, budget can be set accordingly – e.g. Markets, Our Manchester, Be proud.

Audience - Geo targeting available down to post code level. Multi demographics - based on user's digital footprint.

Print Distribution

Letters and Leaflets

Distribution of key literature - for localised or city-wide campaigns

Essential campaigns with a key need to reach an offline audience – e.g. local consultations, budget consultation, road closures.

Audience locality and a need to provide additional communications drives the targeting for this.

Internal communications

Internal communications is an area we have continued to develop, and which has come into its own during the pandemic and in the council's response to the findings in the race equalities review. However, we must continue that development ensuring staff and partners working on council priorities are included, engaged and that they receive messaging in a format that works for them.

The new intranet is now up and running which has vastly improved on the previous intranet, is usable for staff who do not work online, and staff survey feedback demonstrates improvement.

For this reason, internal communications has its own strategy focussing on continuous improvement, on closer working relationships with the Human Resources and Organisational Development (HROD) teams and with its own improvement metrics.

The team remains a key part of enabling the transformation change programme Future Shape, the response to the equalities reviews and in ensuring the timely transmission of messages from the chief executive and SMT across the organisation.

Race and equalities review outcomes and progress

Communications and engagement was one of five themed workstreams established by the race equality working party to set about meeting the corporate Race Review recommendations and as such was also a key focus in the review recommendations.

Communications has a role to play in helping to embed race equality in what we see, hear, and do at all levels of the organisation. Our approach includes helping to develop and highlight opportunities to support and celebrate the workforce no matter what role they do or where they work and understand how we all contribute to a fair and equal council.

Strategic communications, specifically internal communications and directorate communications work closer together, alongside HR and Organisational Development, and with other stakeholders including staff, to meet the recommendations.

While progress has been good to date, it is recognised that there is still work to do and this is an important part of ongoing team development which will continue over the life of this strategy.

The review recommended a refresh of the Council's communications approach for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to ensure that:

- The review is high profile
- Key messages, such as the importance of race equality in the Council, reach all staff
- Staff are informed of progress made on race equality and reflects the experiences of black, ethnic or minority staff

Progress to date includes:

- New regular feature in our regular bulletin for managers – Forum - about progress, talent programme, staff networks
- New intranet pages created for the review –narrative and recommendations inaccessible format for all staff
- Staff are now signposted to the Race Equality Staff Network, so they can share ideas and stories with the staff group for a joined-up approach
- Collaboration with the Race Equality Working Party on future ideas including data campaign, engagement tools, summary outcomes
- Equalities features as key message in Our Manchester, Corporate Plan and Future Council narrative and subsequent messages
- Our Manchester brand refresh has developed new characters which are more representative of our staff and of Manchester

There has also been a number of stories in our corporate communications. Guidance has been shared with staff about how they can submit their stories –there are no barriers to having their stories told.

Showcasing and celebrating our diversity is valuable and important part of our work and while there has been progress made this year, we continue to build on improvements.

Partnerships and community groups, health equity and inclusion

The pandemic in many ways forced us to quickly review and change tactics in the way we engage with our communities. Looking forward, it is important to recognise that some of the improvements in our service delivery and indeed some of the ways of working need to remain in place to achieve our objectives.

The focus on health equity through the Covid Health Equity Manchester (CHEM) work has transformed community engagement and built a level of trust and co-operation that was previously not in place in a robust way. This partnership approach – with representatives from various community representative sounding boards, community groups, disability groups, health professionals and engagement leads - is our blueprint for the future.

And while funding will change post pandemic and the health landscape will change with the transformation to Integrated Care System (ICS), we must keep the approach in place which is founded on sharing data and intelligence with key groups to co-produce effective engagement and communications materials. This work will also incorporate the resulting actions from the 'Build Back Fairer' Marmot Review and our own Manchester Marmot Health Inequalities Task Group.

In the last year, there has been formal joint working with the Manchester Health and Care Commissioning(MHCC) communications team and the council communications team. The council's Strategic Head of Communications attends MHCC Executive meetings and a joint council/MHCC head of health communications ensures there are now shared outcomes on delivery of communications activity in the forward plan.

While at this stage the future locality offer is not clear, the fundamental principles of this joint approach – leading a communications and engagement group with representatives from the Manchester City Council, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning(MHCC), Manchester Local Care Organisation(MLCO), Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust(MFT), Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust(GMMH) and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise(VCSE) sector should continue and develop in the lifetime of this strategy.

These same principles have also been applied to the Age Friendly activity, and the relationships here will develop to continue to ensure the principles apply to all our communications activity.

Digital offer and media – digital inclusion

Over the course of this strategy we will continue to work on a digital first approach, targeting digital networks with information to encourage a direct relationship. We will continue the current level of engagement with traditional media, for both proactive and reactive work, but our focus will be on our own content creation and strategic positioning of that narrative. The team works closely with the press – across hyper local, local, regional, national and international outlets to gain proactive coverage for stories that reflect the Council's priorities.

The team also manages enquiries to ensure stories about the Council reflect a fair and honest representation of a given scenario (whether positive or negative), and importantly include a 'Right of Reply' in stories about the Council.

As such we will be publishers of information rather than providers to media. It should be stressed that media outlets are often also part of the same networks as the council.

This digital first approach is not at the cost of those people who do not have digital access – we will continue to work closely with services and communities to ensure that suitable non-digital alternatives are available. This applies to our external work as well as our internal communications activity.

Social media is now one of the council's main platforms for residents to receive information and news from us. Our channels have continued to grow steadily each month keeping residents more connected than ever, something that has been put into sharp focus during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our approach to social media is the subject of its own strategy.

Developing the team and individuals

Team and individual development is a vital aspect of a high performing service and as such is a high priority. However, given reducing budgets, much of the traditional external-based training is now no longer an option.

As a team, we will continue to generate our own cross-service learning, based on sharing best practice locally, with other core cities and with national providers including the Government Communications Service (GCS) and LGcomms. LGcomms is a national organisation made up of an association of authorities that works to raise the standard of communications in local government.

Individuals identify development needs through the 'About You' process, and we will continue to provide that support and development in-house through colleagues as

appropriate. Where team members attend paid for external courses, part of the development is to share that learning with wider members of the service.

Changing shape of the team/areas to invest and save

The team must constantly evolve to meet changing needs and preferences of residents and businesses, as well as the needs of the council.

Work will continue to ensure that the service can handle any reductions to its funding in the period of this strategy by:

- Developing the teams to be more generalist in skills, while retaining core specialist skills
- Recognising areas of growth and where more investment is needed (e.g. AV and presentations) and investing in training to ensure resilience and capacity
- To look at the overall structure of our offer and whether this remains the best way forward
- Team plans recognise where external factors may impact on the role of the service or individuals – for example the Resident and Business Digital Experience Programme (RBDXP) may change the nature of the digital team or retirements may mean succession plans need to be addressed
- Regularly review contracts for best value – for example social media management software, maintenance contracts

The team remains a key enabler for other services to achieve savings, and for the council's major transformation programmes including the Future Shape programme and Resident and Business Digital Experience Programme(RBDXP).

We will continue to use technology on offer to drive down our service costs, maintain our digital first approach but be mindful that some of those savings will continue to be used to ensure those who do not have digital access are not left behind.

Crisis communications

A standalone Emergency Communications Plan outlines the principles, resource allocation and strategic communications activity required to provide corporate communications during the response and recovery phases arising from an incident or civil emergency.

It forms part of the Council's emergency response and recovery plan and outlines how Manchester City Council will communicate with residents and a range of stakeholders. The plan is reviewed on an annual basis or following any major incident.

Evaluation

This is key to knowing whether as a team we are having an impact – if we are influencing and achieving outcomes, rather than outputs.

This has been a huge area of whole team development in the last two years and will continue to be developed as a core skill for all employees and a standard part of all communications planning.

All communications plans for priorities 1 and 2 work will have an evaluation scheme devised as part of the initial workplan.

For the life of this strategy, as a team we will:

- Continue to with the quarterly corporate reputation tracker of attitude, perception and satisfaction on the council priorities for internal use with SMT.
- Continue to use and develop further the monthly evaluation documents used for team development and challenge, also sharing with SMT and key directorates as appropriate (examples to be attached)
- Continue to include communications as a key strand of the annual staff survey
- Campaigns to have their own evaluation metrics to report to relevant directors

Examples of routine daily evaluation include:

Social media metrics

- Followers – building an audience
- User engagement – clicks on call to action
- Organic reach and impressions
- Shares

Web and direct email content

- Views and dwell time on agreed priority web pages
- Email click through –acting upon a call to action

Media

- Media coverage

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APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PRIORITIES 2022-23



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

The Content and Strategy team works within an annual work programme of communications and marketing campaigns* that link directly to the service and council's business objectives and help protect and improve the council's reputation.

The work plan is developed by marketing/communications specialists working with service managers ensuring the council's strategic aims and services objectives are reflected in all communications activity. There is a clear line of sight of all work coming into the team that can be prioritised by managers on an ongoing basis and resource is used as flexibly as possible to deliver the priorities and projects emerging.

Our nine Corporate Priorities reflect what we – as a council – need to do and focus on to deliver the Our Manchester vision. Equality, inclusion and sustainability is at the heart of everything we do along with a renewed focus on young people, our economy, health, housing, our environment and infrastructure.

All communications activities demonstrably promote work carried out to achieve the objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan.

The nine priorities are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Zero carbon Manchester | 6. Neighbourhoods |
| 2. Growth that benefits everyone | 7. Connections |
| 3. Young people | 8. Equality |
| 4. Healthy, cared-for people | 9. Well-managed council |
| 5. Housing | |

The broad scope of the team's work is as follows:

- **Priority 1** campaigns are those that will have the biggest impact on council reputation and are vital to the delivery of one of our agreed priorities.
- **Priority 2** campaigns are closely aligned to priorities but have a lesser impact on the reputation of the organisation.
- **Priority 3** activity includes smaller campaigns - either aimed at smaller audiences or supporting time limited activity or events.

*The term 'campaign' means a linked series of activities designed to achieve an agreed objective.

Please note: Activity below is aligned to a main core priority; however, it is clear that a number of projects deliver a number of cross cutting outcomes outlined in the Corporate Plan.

This is a live document that is regularly reviewed and updated based on discussions with services leads and emerging needs.

APPENDIX 2

PRIORITY 1

Activity	Directorate	Date
Corporate Priority 1: Zero Carbon Manchester		
Zero Carbon Manchester	Corporate Core	Ongoing
Climate Change Action Plan - Transport actions	Growth and Development	Ongoing
Clean Air Zone	Corporate Core	Ongoing
Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy - Tree planting programme	Growth and Development	Ongoing
Neighbourhoods climate change - comms support for climate change projects	Neighbourhoods	TBC
Corporate Priority 2: Growth that benefits everyone		
Our Manchester Strategy	Corporate Core	Ongoing
Manchester Marmot and levelling up agenda and associated communications engagement activity support (with links to anti-poverty strategy)	Public Health and all	Ongoing
Family poverty/Universal Credit /debt management advice campaign	Neighbourhoods, Children Services, Adults and Corporate Core	Ongoing
Free School Meals/Welfare Provision Scheme/Grants	Corporate Core	Ongoing
Living Wage City	Corporate Core	Ongoing
Work and skills - residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic narrative Help and support available for those coming off furlough, made redundant or working fewer hours. 16-19 year old offer and youth unemployment 	Corporate Core and Growth and Development	Ongoing Ongoing
Work and skills - businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging businesses to access support grants (COVID-19 recovery) Encourage them to take on an apprentice and/or provide a Kickstart opportunity 	Corporate Core and Growth and Development	Ongoing Ongoing
Residential Growth and Regeneration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ancoats and New Islington – next phase. Multiple developments over the next 3 years. Eastern Gateway North Manchester Major Investment programme - Victoria North / North Manchester Health Campus 	Growth and Development	Ongoing
City Centre Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic recovery - support/publicity around Levelling Up and any other funding bids. Promotion of City Centre and events. Active travel strategy and planning 	Growth and Development	Year round

APPENDIX 2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport policy/City Centre Transport Strategy (CCTS) - delivering the strategy High Speed Rail 2 (HS2) Comm's/PR for individual projects – e.g. Mayfield Park in Aug/Sept 22 Local Plan 		
Corporate Priority 3: Young People		
Our Year	Children's Services and all	Ongoing
Launch of the £1.6m Youth Commissioning Fund	Neighbourhoods	TBC
SEND – website and local offer - promotion and access to – a finding from the recent inspection	Children's Services	Ongoing
Social Care workforce – recruitment and retention	Children's Services	Ongoing
Corporate Priority 4: Healthy, cared for people		
Transformation of health and care system programme - Better outcomes, better lives - in partnership with the MLCO	Adult Social Care	Ongoing
Adult Social Care – Commissioning Plan	Adult Social Care	Ongoing
Adult Social Care – recruitment and retention campaign (including Social Worker Day – 16 March)	Adult Social Care	Ongoing
Adult Social Care – safeguarding	Adult Social Care	Ongoing
Flu vaccination campaign	Public Health	Sept - Feb
Covid vaccination campaign	Public Health	
Covid-19 Response and Recovery and associated engagement activity support – testing, vaccinations, staying well – working in partnership	Public Health	Ongoing
Health Equity – building on themes throughout the pandemic	Public Health	Ongoing
Integrated Care System (ICS) transition - in partnership with MHCC	Public Health	Ongoing
Corporate Priority 5: Housing		
Strategic Housing and residential development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing delivery pipeline New Housing Strategy (links to Homelessness Strategy, Enabling Independence Strategy, Age-Friendly Manchester) Zero/low carbon retrofit – green skills This City – launch, Rodney consultation, next phases Project 500 Extra Care schemes Reactive - closure of traveller site Silk St - start on site Fire safety 	Growth and Development	Ongoing

APPENDIX 2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Sector Housing (plus short term lets) Selective Licensing 		
Northwards Housing Operations (NHO) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of services into the council New strategy for NHO 	Growth and Development	Ongoing
Homelessness – focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevention (and post pandemic support) Working in Partnership Winter Communications (Rough Sleeping) Promoting our Work and Successes 	Neighbourhoods	Ongoing
Corporate Priority 6: Neighbourhoods		
Waste and Recycling Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service messages for bins Flytipping Grounds Maintenance Litter / Street Cleansing Enforcement 	Neighbourhoods	Ongoing
Keep Manchester Tidy Campaigns Promoting targeted campaign and annual Great British Spring Clean	Neighbourhoods	Ongoing
Corporate Priority 7: Connections		
Highways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deansgate – phase 1 and phase 2 Alan Turing Way Corridors Moving traffic offences – consult and implement Bus gates Clean Air Zone implementation 	Neighbourhoods	Year round
See also growth and development projects under priority 2		
Corporate Priority 8: Equality		
Equalities runs throughout all activity, ensuring inclusion is a key part of service planning both internally and externally. This applies to how we develop and share messaging, the channels and networks we use, and how we listen to feedback.		
Corporate Priority 9: Well-managed council		
2022 Local election campaign	Corporate Core	Feb 22- May 22
Planning for Local Election 2023	Corporate Core	
Voter ID in advance of Local Election 2023**	Corporate Core	TBC
2023 Budget consultation	Corporate Core	Oct – Feb
Activity that cuts across all priorities		
Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Manchester Strategy/ behaviours /Listening in Action (LiA) Future Shape of the Council Corporate plan Race Equality Action Plan & Workforce Equality Strategy 	Corporate Core	Year round

APPENDIX 2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zero Carbon staff engagement Age friendly Staff Survey and results Staff Comms and Engagement plan Budget consultation (internal) 		Dec - Jan
Digital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident and Business Digital Experience Project (RBDXP) – digital first Accessibility/SCULPT training/e-learning Government Digital Service (GDS) Audit response / any work needed Content management system upgrades Intranet support 	Corporate Core	Ongoing
Other		
Arena Attack Memorial	Corporate Core	May
Covid memorial	Corporate Core	TBC

PRIORITY 2

Activity	Directorate	Date
Corporate Priority 2: Growth that benefits everyone		
Our Town Hall Project	Corporate Core	Ongoing
Social Value	Corporate Core	Ongoing
Adult Education (Manchester Adult Education Service) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrolment Campaigns Service support	Corporate Core and Growth and Development	Ongoing
Work and skills – residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult skills - focus on encouraging residents with lower skills to develop Digital inclusion/digital skills Business enterprise and business start-up advice for young people 14-24 years of age (including Manchester Youth Market) Skills for Life 	Corporate Core and Growth and Development	Ongoing
Work and skills - businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Business Sounding Board on getting offices open and people back into the City Brexit Social Value 	Corporate Core and Growth and Development	Ongoing
City Centre Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future Manchester – development narrative Electric Vehicle charging strategy and planning Business comms and engagement Comms collateral to support lobbying/funding bids 	Growth and Development	Ongoing

APPENDIX 2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piccadilly Gardens – design, funding and delivery Public realm/placemaking Places for Everyone 		
Corporate Priority 3: Young People		
Fostering - recruitment and retention campaign – and links to potential GM campaign	Children's Services	Ongoing
Adoption – recruitment campaign	Children's Services	Ongoing
Children and young people - start well agenda	Children's Services	Ongoing
School holiday activity campaign: Loads to do	Neighbourhoods	Feb, Easter, May, July/Aug, Oct
Summer reading challenge	Neighbourhoods	July/Aug
Parks (summer) activity programme	Neighbourhoods	July/Aug
Corporate Priority 4: Healthy, cared for people		
Adult Social Care – co-production with VCSE	Adult Social Care	Ongoing
Winning Hearts and Minds – improving long term heart and mental health	Public Health	TBC
Corporate Priority 6: Neighbourhoods		
Neighbourhoods Annual Awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be Proud Sport Culture 	Neighbourhoods	Ongoing
Major events including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remembrance Sunday Manchester Day Queen's Platinum Jubilee 	Corporate Core and Neighbourhoods	Oct – Nov June Year-round activity – main event - June
Neighbourhood Investment Funds Promotion	Neighbourhoods	TBC
Support for the Bringing Services Together for People in Places model	Neighbourhoods	Ongoing
Neighbourhoods improvements projects	Neighbourhoods	Ongoing
MCR VIP (Volunteer Inspire Programme) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the relaunch 	Neighbourhoods	Ongoing
Licensing/Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Plan - Open Space Survey Planning reform 	Neighbourhoods	Ongoing
Christmas campaign 2022	Neighbourhoods	Oct - Dec
Corporate Priority 7: Connections		
Highways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking and cycling schemes x 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Quarter Rochdale Canal North Eastern Gateway Chorlton Levy & Burnage Low Traffic Neighbourhood Fallowfield Loop Beswick 	Growth and Development	Ongoing

APPENDIX 2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation approach refresh • Bee Network roll out in the city • Streets for All 		
Corporate Priority 8: Equality		
Equalities runs throughout all activity, ensuring inclusion is a key part of service planning both internally and externally. This applies to how we develop and share messaging, the channels and networks we use, and how we listen to feedback.		
Major events including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Women's Day • Int Day for Disabled People 	Corporate Core and Neighbourhoods	Jan – Mar Dec
Age Friendly recovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign • Communications Standards • Events programme – International Day of Older Persons (1 Oct) 	Health and cross cutting links embedded	Ongoing
Corporate Priority 9: Well-managed council		
Annual billing (Council Tax & Business Rates)	Corporate Core	Feb – Mar
State of City Report	Corporate Core	August - Dec
Annual canvass campaign	Corporate Core	July – Nov 21
Activity that cuts across all priorities		
Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards for Excellence/Long Service Awards • Intranet • Staff Surveys – across the year • Leadership Summit • Health and Wellbeing comms and campaign development 	Corporate Core – Internal	Year round
Digital Comms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civica – payment forms upgrade • Accessibility upgrades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help & Support Manchester • Modern.gov • Planning portal 	Corporate Core	Ongoing
Other		
Operation Bridges (as required)	Corporate Core	TBA

PRIORITY 3

Activity	Directorate	Date
Corporate Priority 2: Growth that benefits everyone		
The Factory	Corporate Core	Ongoing
Gorton Hub	Neighbourhoods	Ongoing
Corporate Priority 3: Young People		
Serious Youth Violence - work/initiatives taking place to divert and avoid	Children's Services	
Private Fostering	Children's Services	
Support for Schools Hub/Portal	Children's Services	Ongoing
School attendance – links to vaccination programme	Children's Services	Ongoing

APPENDIX 2

Corporate Priority 4: Healthy, cared for people		
Adult Social Care - helping people to live independently at home	Adult Social Care	Ongoing
Maintaining services and safeguarding – working with MHCC	Public Health	Ongoing
Corporate Priority 6: Neighbourhoods		
Highways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business as usual - resurfacing, gully cleansing, potholes etc 	Neighbourhoods	Year round
Events Programme (including World Para Swim, European Taekwondo Championships, Women Euros etc)	Neighbourhoods	Year round
Refurbishment of New Smithfield Market	Neighbourhoods	TBC
Piccadilly Market refresh	Neighbourhoods	TBC
Sports Awards	Neighbourhoods	June (nominations) Nov (event)
MCRactive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New membership scheme MCRactive.com new release Promotion of £100m Cap projects 	Neighbourhoods	TBC
Cultural Impact Survey	Neighbourhoods	TBC
Loadstodo.co.uk resident facing promotion	Neighbourhoods	Ongoing
Cultural partnership grants	Neighbourhoods	May (consultation) Aug/Sept (launch)
Manchester Art Gallery campaign support	Neighbourhoods	ongoing
Libraries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library Live Promotion of new/refurbed facilities (Gorton, Crumpsall, Chorlton, Queens Park, Platt) Support BIPC programmes Reconnecting services/venues with neighbourhoods 	Neighbourhoods	Ongoing
Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) city centre consultation	Neighbourhoods	Autumn 2022
Serious Violence Duty consultation	Neighbourhoods	Summer 2022
Corporate Priority 8: Equality		
Equalities runs throughout all activity, ensuring inclusion is a key part of service planning both internally and externally. This applies to how we develop and share messaging, the channels and networks we use, and how we listen to feedback.		
Hate Crime annual programme	Neighbourhoods	Oct and Feb
Domestic Abuse – targeted awareness raising	Neighbourhoods	Jan-June
Activity that cuts across all priorities		
Digital Comms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search upgrade Web feedback upgrade Business as usual activity 	Corporate Core	Ongoing

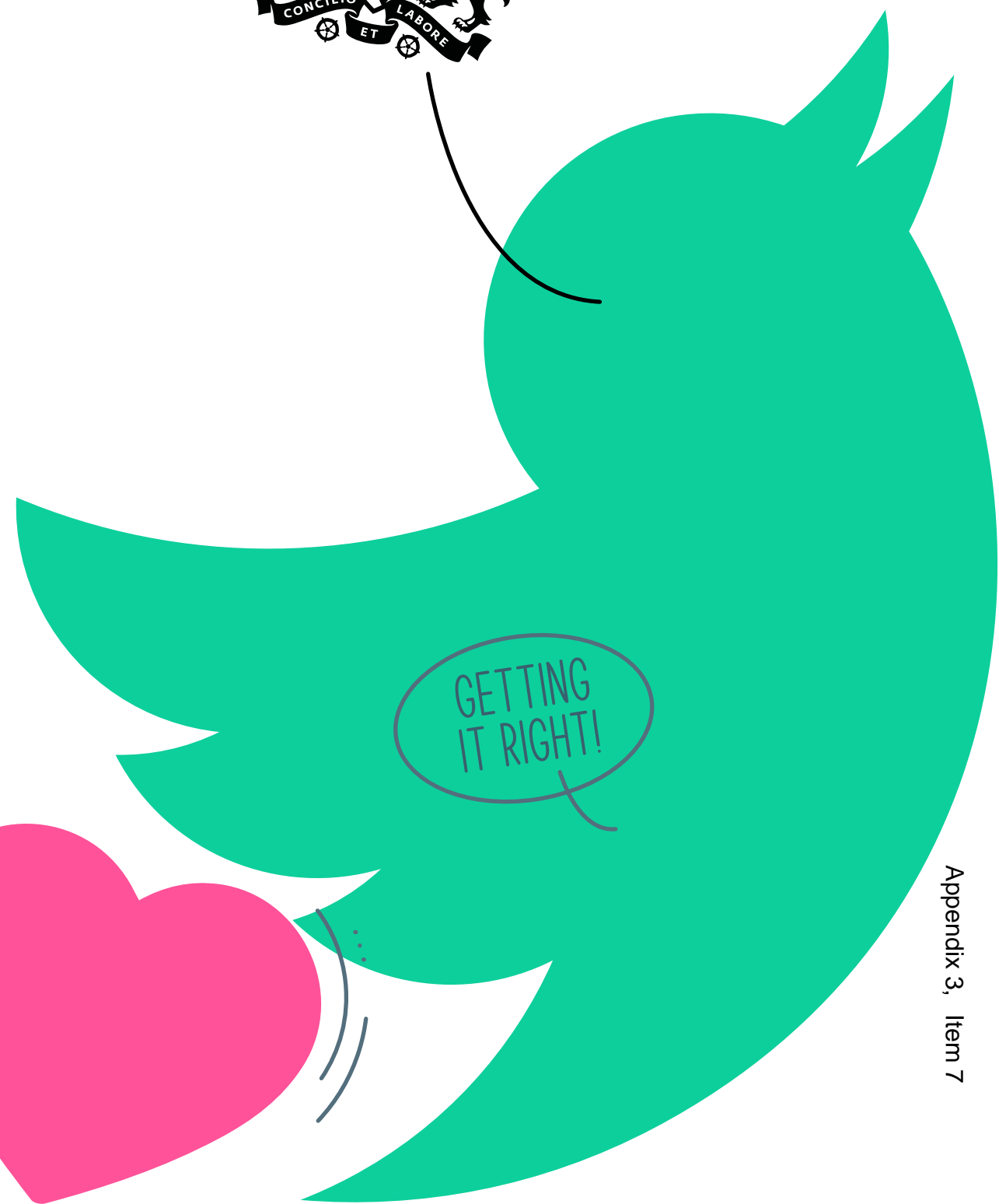
APPENDIX 2

Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff bulletins: Forum/Wellbeing Wednesday/ Staff Spotlight/Team Talk/ Ad hoc updates/Intranet updates • General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) • Cyber security • ICT • Information Governance 	Corporate Core	Ongoing
Other		
Civic (ongoing comms support)	Corporate Core	Ongoing

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Like & Share

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MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY
/ /



GETTING
IT RIGHT!

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Look who's talking!

Over the past ten years, social media has transformed the way we, as a council, communicate and engage with residents, businesses, partners and visitors. Our social media channels enable us to speak directly to our audiences and get involved in two-way conversations with a human, non-corporate voice.

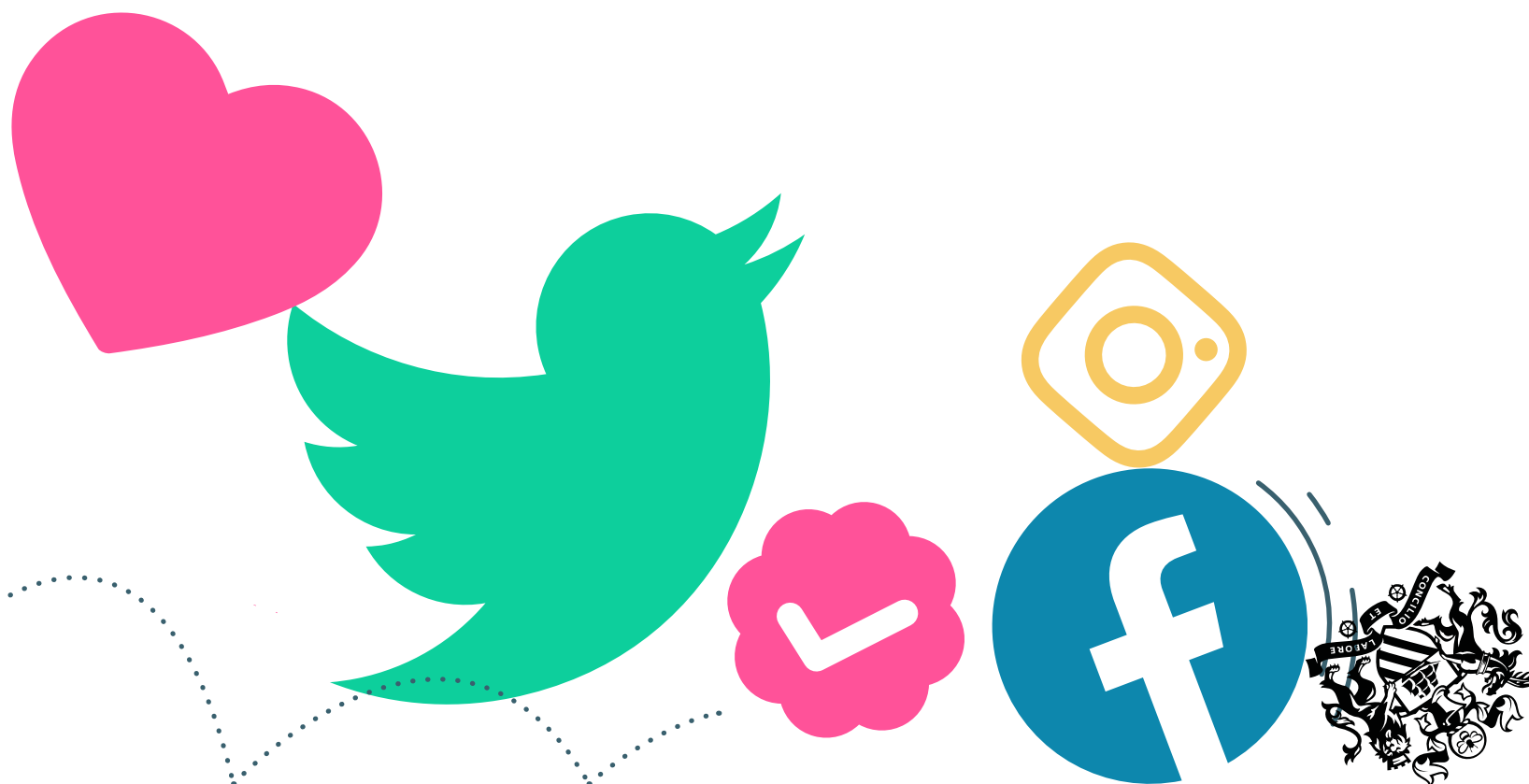
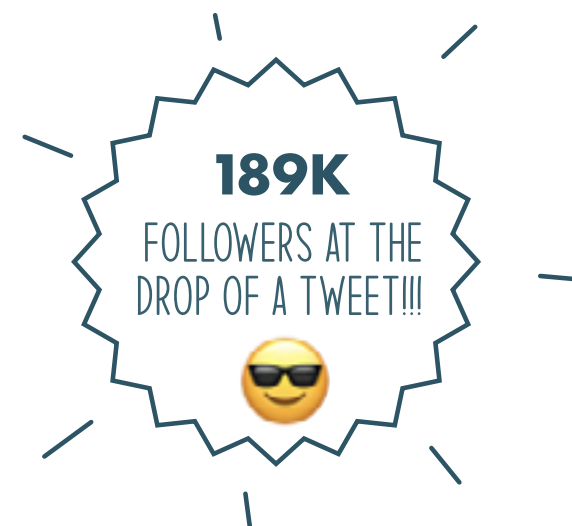
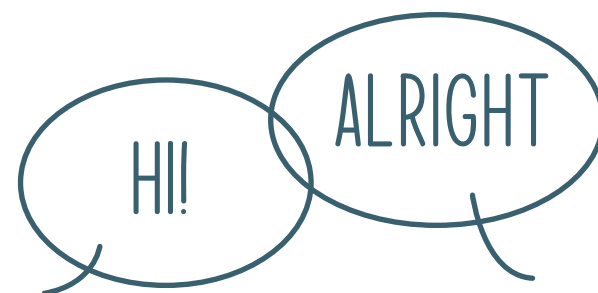
Social media is now the main platform for our residents receiving information and news from us. Our channels have grown organically over time, keeping residents more connected than ever. This is something that has been put into sharp focus during the COVID-19 pandemic, as people spend more time at home and online.

Social media is so ingrained in our communications approach that it's hard to imagine a time when we couldn't speak directly to Manchester residents at the drop of a tweet. Our channels are an extension of the Manchester City Council brand. We're really proud of the work we have done to build our social media audience, and even prouder of the ongoing conversations we have with residents.

ADAPT, RESPOND
& LOOK

Social media platforms are ever-increasing and so is the number of people using them. People are also using them differently, so we can't rest on our laurels; we need to adapt, respond and look at how we can do even better to manage our social media successfully. With Twitter and Facebook now deemed 'traditional social media', things have come a long way since we first dipped our toe in the world of social back in 2009; the digital landscape is constantly shifting and we must move and adapt with it to fully benefit from the opportunities it offers.

There will be key learnings and changes that inform this strategy in the future. This is a continually evolving strategy that will adapt with the ever-shifting social media landscape. We will respond to changes as they happen and adapt our approach using new tools and insights as they become available. We must be fluid enough to react quickly to continue improving engagement, conversations with residents and, of course, outcomes.



This strategy is underpinned
by key behaviours of...

Our Manchester



Better lives

It's about people!



Listening

We listen,
learn and respond!



Recognising strengths

...of individuals and communities.
We start from strengths!

THIS IS WHY
WE DO
WHAT WE DO!



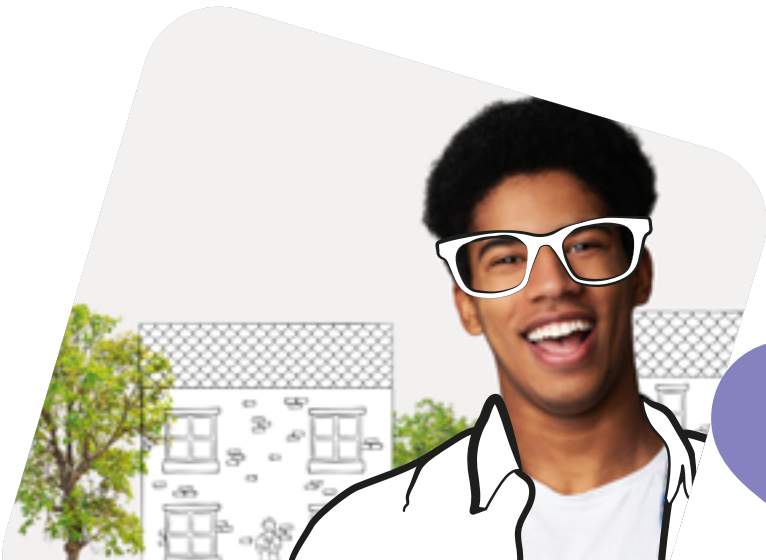
Working together

We build relationships
and create conversations!

Objectives

This Social Media strategy supports digital innovation and the core objectives in the Communications Strategy. These are:

- Delivering communications that recognise Manchester's diverse audiences, targeting to their needs, preferences and location
- Identifying communication opportunities that take advantage of digital lifestyles in the city, where people are talking
- Developing communications that recognise and use the tools and voices available to us
- Supporting councillors and staff with the tools to act as advocates for the Council and the city.

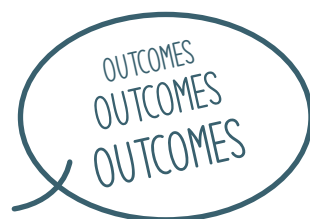


This strategy outlines our approach to engage and communicate with people who live, work, visit or do business here. Our objectives are to:

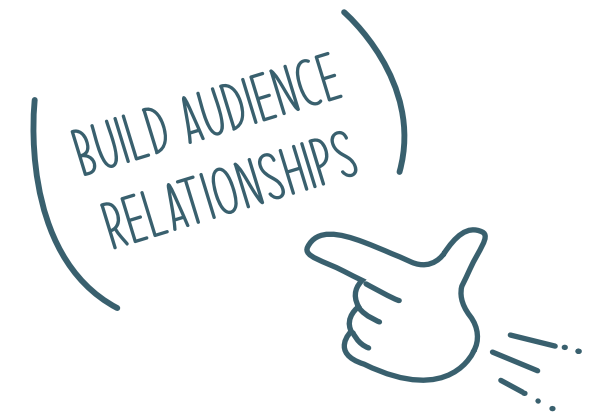
- **Develop a tone of voice** for the Council that encourages conversation and engagement, and keep this tone of voice consistent to build trust
- **Add humanity and humour** to stimulate conversation where and if appropriate, finding the right balance between being formal and informal
- **Know our advocates** and effectively utilise their voice
- **Set an agreed protocol** and governance framework to shape a consistent approach to how we use our social media channels



- **Focus on quality** over quantity
- **Know what content needs to be polished**, and know when using free software platforms such as CANVA is sufficient
- **Increase engagement** and be outcome-focused
- **Ensure all our messages are truly targeted** at the intended audience (whether organic or paid for)



- **Listen** to what people are saying (or not saying) on social media
- **Build valued relationships** with our community networks, partners and key influencers
- **Build a trusted relationship** with our online audience
- **Share learnings and tips** across the team and with Council members and colleagues
- **Create a regular dashboard** that effectively measures outcomes, and use the intelligence this provides for future learnings
- **Acknowledge when social media isn't the best approach** and recommend other communications approaches.

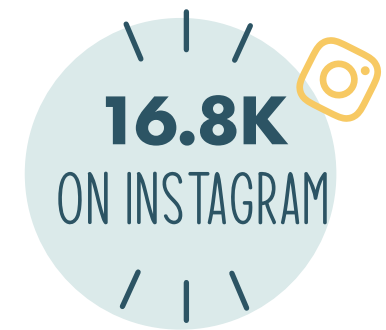
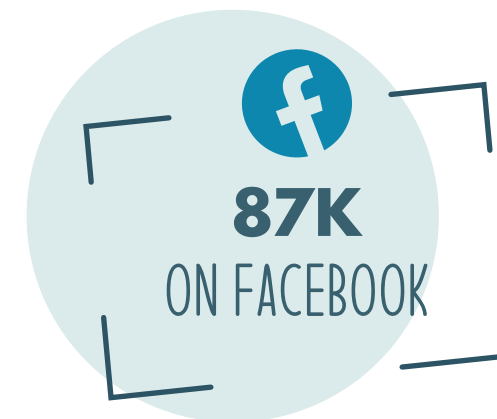


What a voice! 🗨️

Our social-media audience is big. We have one of the biggest local authority followings in the country:

320,600

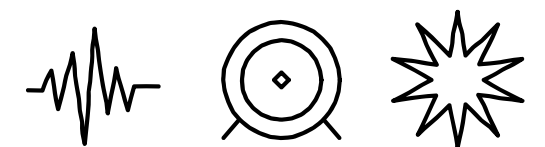
TOTAL FOLLOWERS ACROSS SOCIAL NETWORKS



Manchester City Council is a known, liked and trusted source of information, and we are proud of having built up such a strong following. However, we need to acknowledge that only a percentage of these figures are local people (our residents) – the audience we need to be reaching. Our messages need to be engaging the people who live in, work in and visit Manchester – those who need to access the services and support we provide to improve their lives.

To effectively reach those Manchester residents and deliver messages that resonate with them we need to change the way we are using our social-media accounts. Although we have made a lot of progress in moving away from a broadcast model of communicating on social media, we need to do more to listen, target and engage. We will do this through a mix of organic and paid-for social media delivered to the right place at the right time and on the right platform.

WE NEED TO DO MORE TO



LISTEN, TARGET, ENGAGE!!!

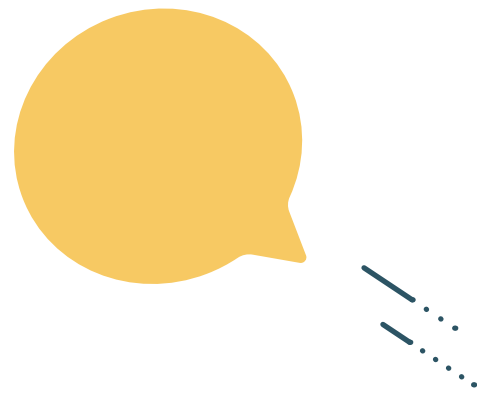
Our social media needs to be social. It is an extension of our brand. Engagement activity will be an ongoing conversation with our target audience and include content that means something to them – content they can relate to. Our feeds shouldn't be a stream of call-to-action posts.

We will have a human voice and not be afraid of sharing 'audience identity content' that will simply make our audience smile; the content will encourage them to react and share. This audience-identity content will allow us to strike a balance between asking people to do things/sign up to things, and simply having a positive conversation with us. We will work towards sharing one piece of audience-identity content for each call-to-action post.

This balance will allow us to drive engagement, build trust and interest in what we are saying, and get people talking. It will boost our ratings with the algorithms so that when we do have a clear call-to-action message to get across, our posts will be seen in the feeds we want them to be seen in. We will be more clever, and when it allows, funnier – but acknowledging that we still have a job to do as the Council. There will be a balance.



LET'S MAKE OUR AUDIENCE
SMILE!



We will focus monthly content plans around five key message streams:



Behaviour change

Health, exercise, recycling



Democratic voice

Consultations, organisational priorities and service updates



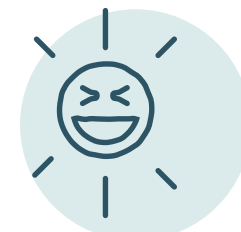
**Life moments/
Milestones**

Christmas, Mother's Day, exam results



Lifestyle

Celebrating our city and what it has to offer



Human

Sharing a unique human voice, being Mancunian, and adding our famous humour where appropriate.

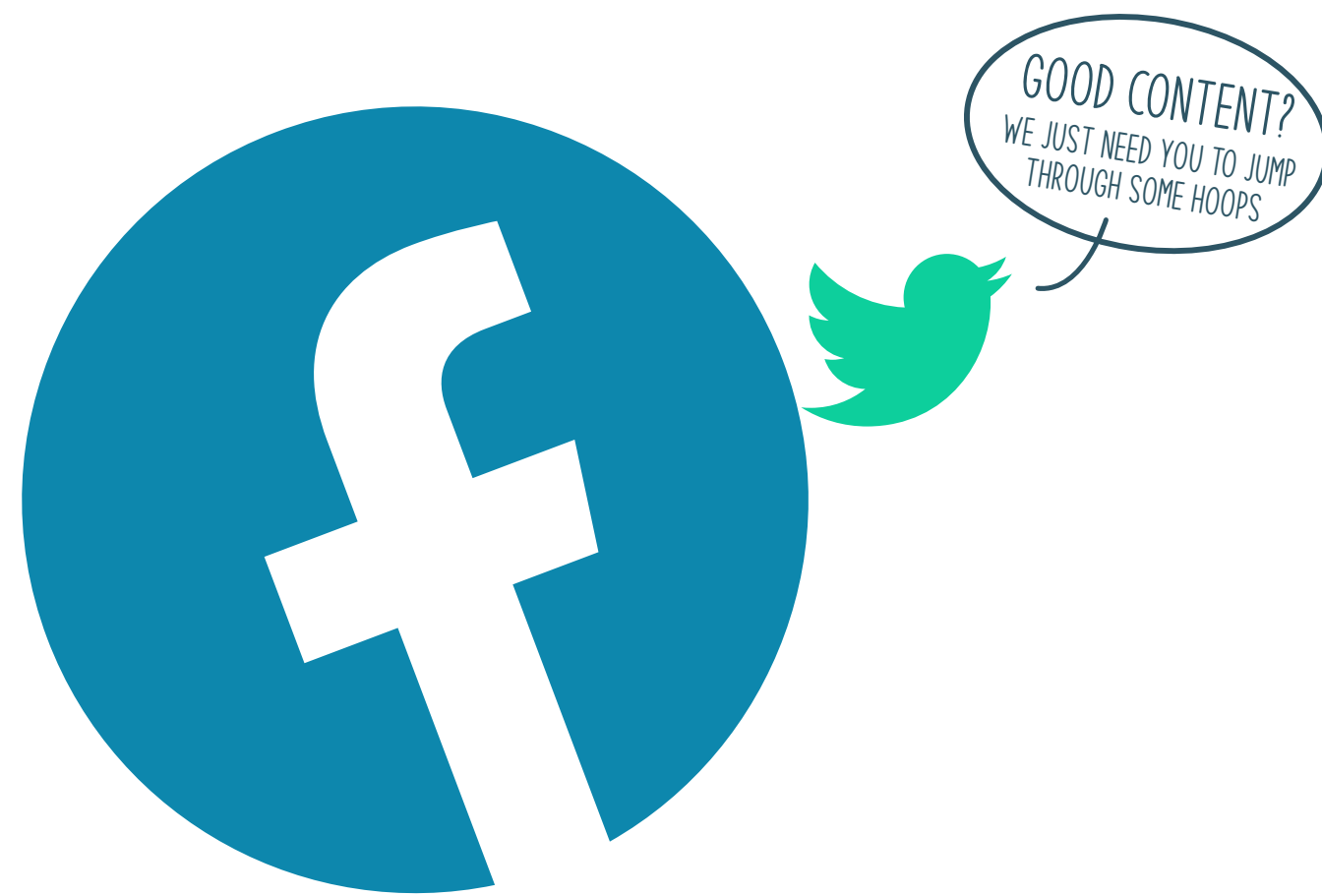
Algorithms

So we've got 320,600 followers on social media; that means 320,600 people see our content – right? Wrong. Each social media platform has algorithms, and those algorithms make choices about what each person will see on their home feed.

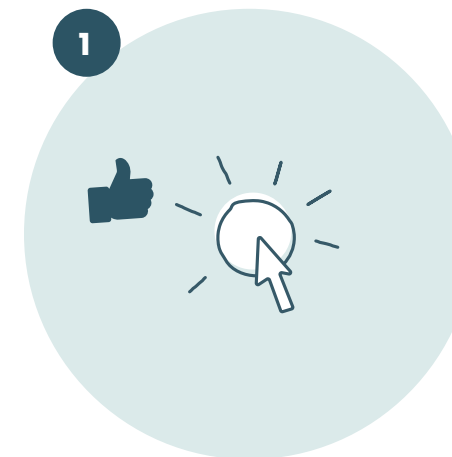
Algorithms teach us about good content and reach.

These algorithms vary from platform to platform but there is a lot of commonality across them all. Algorithms are crucial to this social media strategy and crucial to our audiences seeing and engaging with our content.

Here is a general picture of how algorithms work across platforms and how a piece of content might be affected by them.



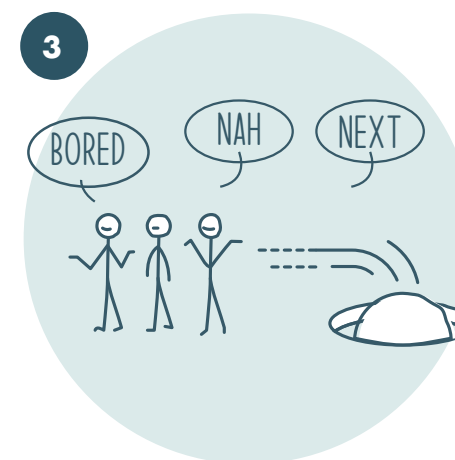
Something like this!



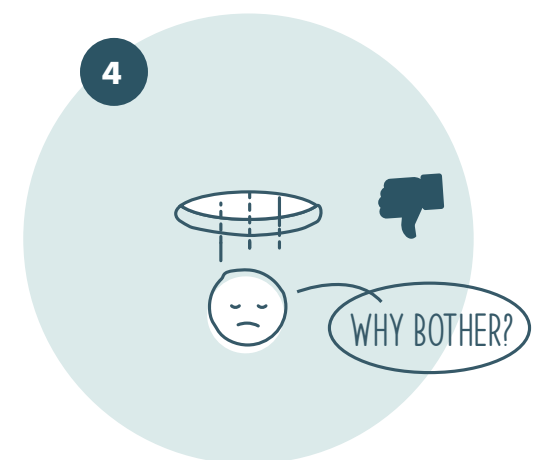
1
You post something. Well done! But don't be too confident.



2
The platform throws it to a tiny sample of your **MOST ENGAGED** viewers.



3
If it doesn't get shares, likes, comments etc from even the most engaged of your followers, it gives up on your post, and shows **NOBODY** else.



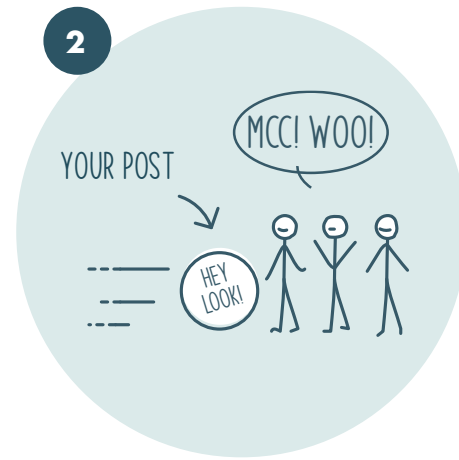
4
Just like that. Dead in the water – and it gets worse. The algorithm will penalise your unengaging post further, by showing your next post to an **EVEN SMALLER** sample.



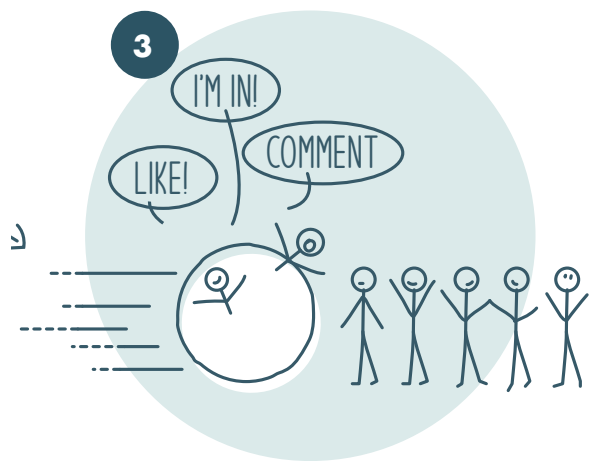
Or maybe like this!



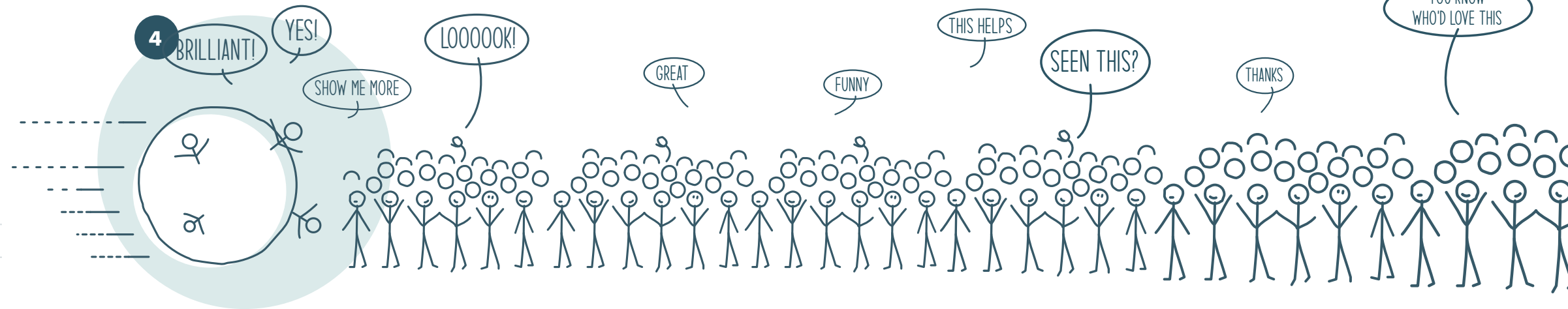
You post something.
Well done!



The platform throws it
to a tiny sample of your
MOST ENGAGED viewers.



It catches on! It gains traction with
that small sample. They pass it on,
hover, look or – even better – do
active things like comment,
share and like your post.



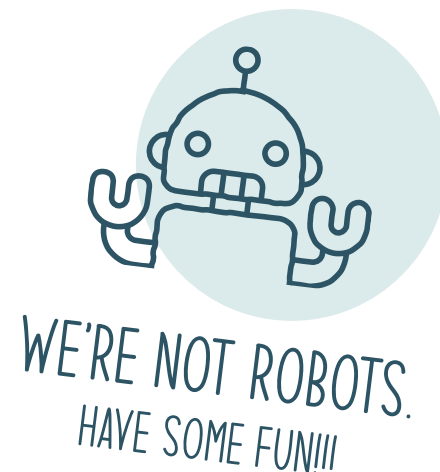
It sees your content getting attention and
keeping people on the platform. It shows
your content to another selection of your
followers, and if they engage with it, it'll
be shown to more and more people.
It snowballs until your post goes viral.
Your post is massive!



How we do it

1. Tone of voice

We will establish a strong and consistent tone of voice across our social-media channels. Our tone of voice will inform all our planned social-media messaging, both organic and paid, as well as our responses to residents' queries or concerns. A tone of voice is not what we say, but how we say it, and it should embody and express our personality and values.



We need a voice that is distinctive, recognisable and unique. This voice is a crucial part of building trust with our audience and will encourage conversation and engagement with our residents. Our tone of voice will position us within the Manchester conversation, allowing us to listen and adapt, and ensure our important messages are shared with residents in a way they understand and enjoy.

Consistency in our use of language and style across our social-media channels is crucial to this, and it needs to be clear what we stand for.

We are proud

We want to shout about all our city has to offer and encourage people to visit and do business here. We love Manchester and the people who live in it. We are ambitious. We are Mancs and proud of it.

We are inclusive

We love how culturally diverse our city is. We welcome and celebrate residents and visitors from all religions and backgrounds.

We are confident

We are confident and sure of ourselves, and we have a bit of Manchester swagger but we aren't annoying.

We are informed

We know Manchester inside out and we know our residents. We do our research and we get our facts straight before we post.

We are honest and transparent

We are honest with our residents, but we are human and admit when we've made mistakes.



We are funny

We are up for a laugh and aren't afraid to use humour or be a bit cheeky. We judge the mood though, and know where to draw the line.

We are supportive

We aren't out of touch. We know people have it hard and we acknowledge their struggles. We are here to help and give people the tools they need to access support services. We help one another. We want to improve the lives of the people who live in Manchester.

We are available

We have a strong social-media presence. We are here to listen, engage with our residents and take on board their concerns.

We are Manchester

We are ambitious and are on our way to becoming a top-flight world-class city by 2025.



2. Quality over quantity

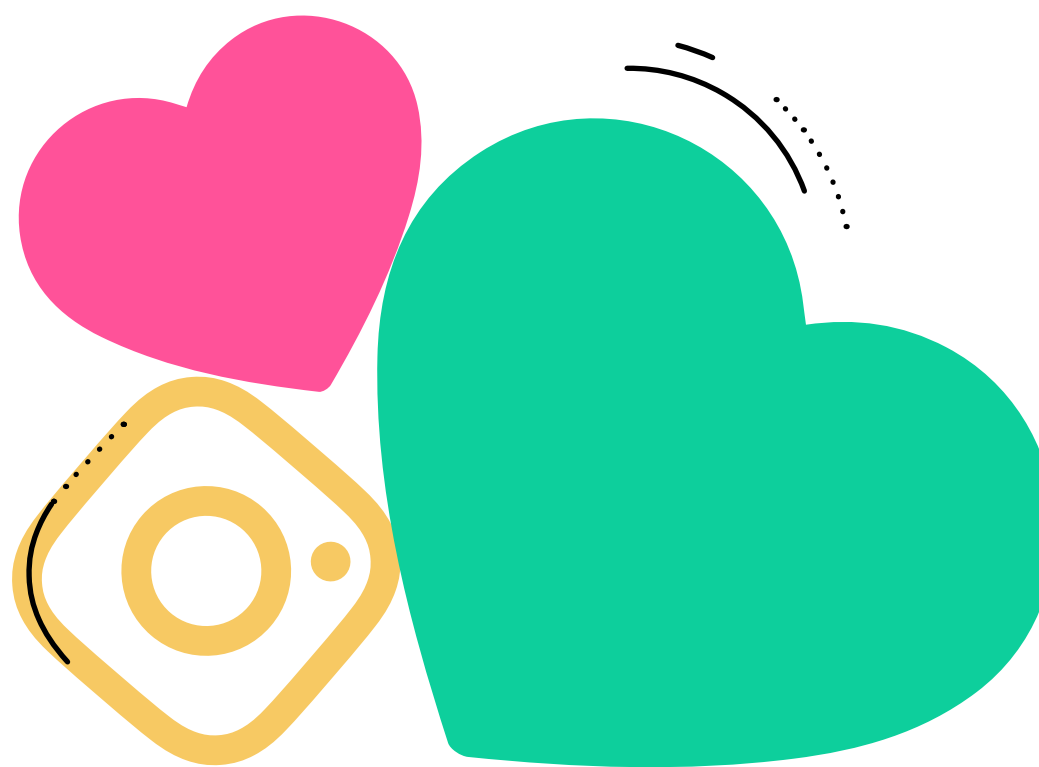
Historically, we have posted a lot of content – often the same content – on our two main channels: Facebook and Twitter. We recognise the need to reflect on the amount of content we produce and post, and we shouldn't be afraid to acknowledge that not all content is relevant to all our audience.

Too many messages can disengage people. We will evaluate each of our platforms and make sure we are delivering content that is appropriate to each – content that will engage each audience and lead to improved outcomes (direct action such as link clicks, sign-ups etc).

Campaigns do not necessarily need extensive content plans prescheduled for months at a time. Good-quality posts that speak to our audience where we know they are engaging are far more effective. Our audience will disengage if we continue to flood our channels with too much content. It is more important now than ever to respond to our audience's behaviour on social media. We need to be flexible and not stick to rigid schedules.

TOO MUCH IS
B 😴😴😴😴 RING!

QUALITY WINS!



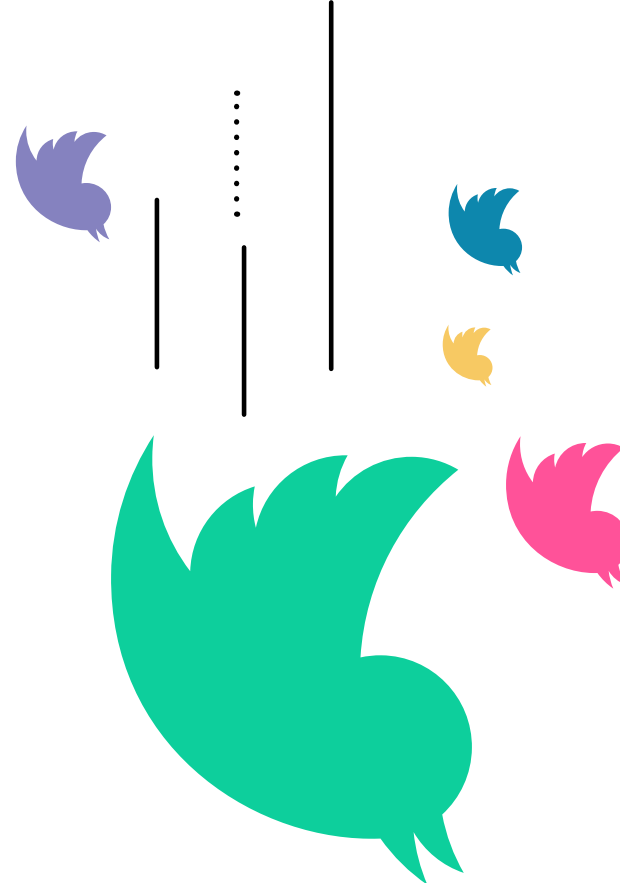
Beating the algorithms

On top of our audience losing interest, scheduling a lot of content that doesn't get engagement has a negative effect on social-media algorithms. These algorithms are there to make sure people see the most exciting and talked-about content. Every time we post something that doesn't get engagement, our rating goes down and subsequent content is shown to a smaller percentage of our audience. Continuing to produce the same amount of content is lose lose, so we need to strip things back.



We will look at the platforms we are using and how we are using them. This means thinking beyond the 'Twitter, Facebook, maybe LinkedIn' trap we have fallen into. While Facebook reigns consistently as the most popular social-media platform in the UK, new platforms are emerging all the time. We know we can reach different sections of our audience by using our existing channels differently and by learning to utilise new channels that harder-to-engage groups are familiar with.

Twitter is one of our main corporate accounts and we will continue to focus on the platform, but we know that its popularity is decreasing nationally and globally. While it is still an important place for communicating corporate updates with journalists and partners, we need to acknowledge that it isn't the place where we are going to speak effectively to large numbers of residents. Figures show that while still popular, Twitter is not the go-to social media for young or older people. Facebook continues to be the platform that over-16s can't live without, while Snapchat is growing in popularity and is the main social media for under-16s in the UK. We will respond to these trends by using data and insights to shift our focus to deliver real outcomes.



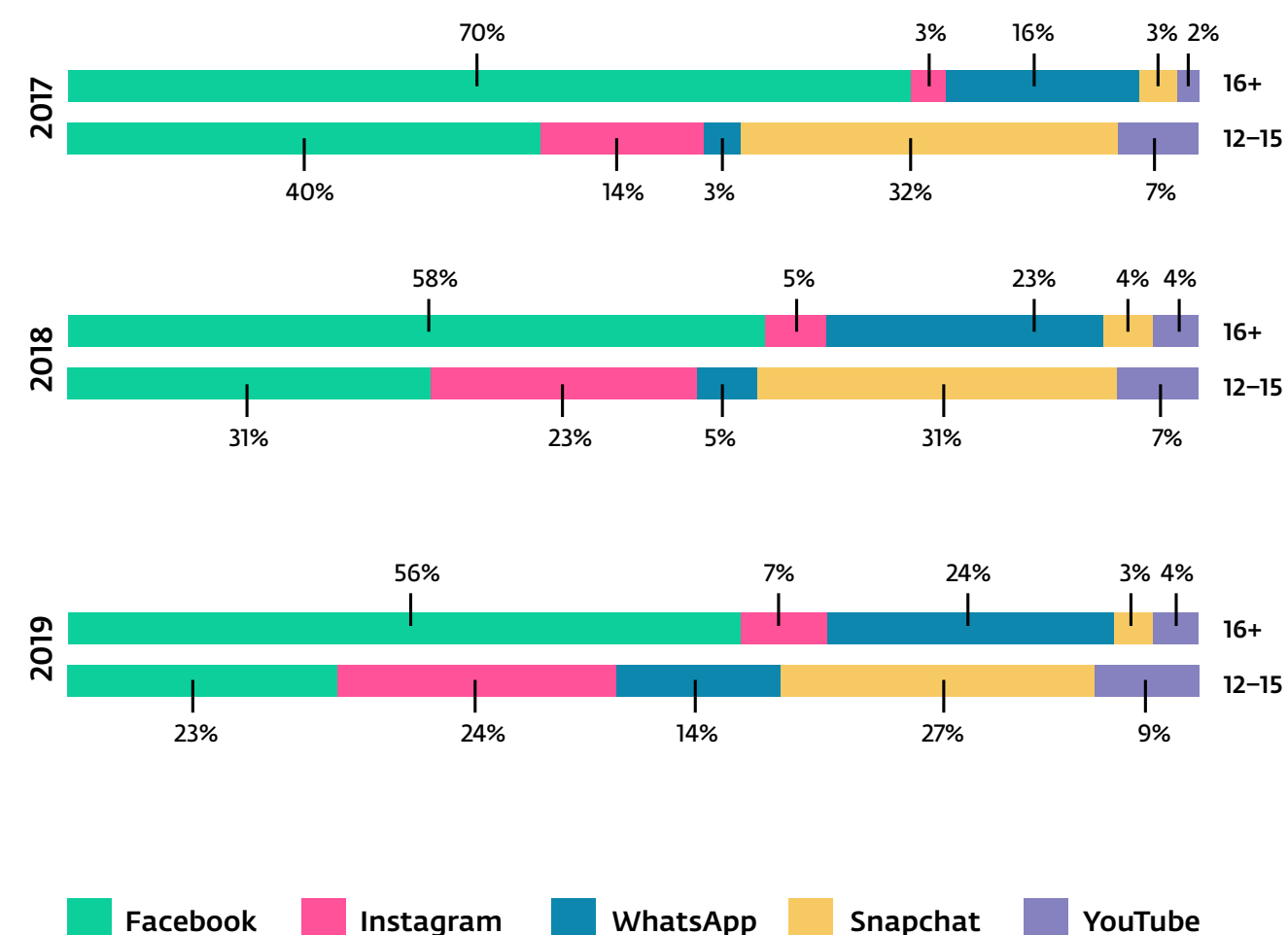
Top ten social-media sites, by reach of the online population: November 2019 ,

Rank	Top Social Media Sites	Reach of online population	Average time spent per visitor (minutes:seconds)
1	Facebook and Messenger	95	23:03
2	Instagram	60	04:41
3	WhatsApp	60	07:07
4	Twitter	54	03:45
5	Pinterest	36	01:51
6	LinkedIn	32	01:56
7	Snapchat (mobile app)	26	21:17
8	Reddit	23	02:30
9	Blogger	16	00:09
10	TikTok	10	15:57

Source: Comscore MMX Multi-Platform, Adults 18+, November 2019, UK



Platform considered as main social-media profile/account by year and age: 2017–2019



Source: Ofcom Adults' Media Literacy and Children's Media Literacy Tracker

Less is more

Producing less content and taking a more targeted approach will inevitably mean councillors and colleagues across the Council, as well as sections of our audience, won't see some of our content. We won't post everything on our corporate accounts; we'll use insights and audience intelligence to target our messaging on platforms our audience uses. This will lead to improved outcomes and give our team more time to create better content that will drive better engagement.

We will invest our time where our audience connects, choosing the spaces we want to be in and how we connect with our audience in those spaces. We will do more to understand our audience, do things differently with our existing channels, and explore new channels.



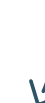
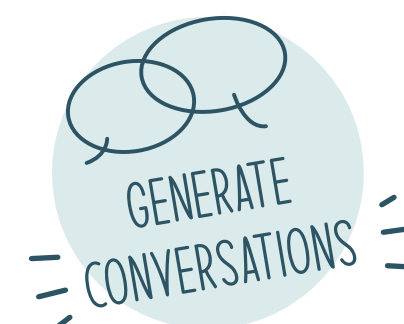
Our focus:

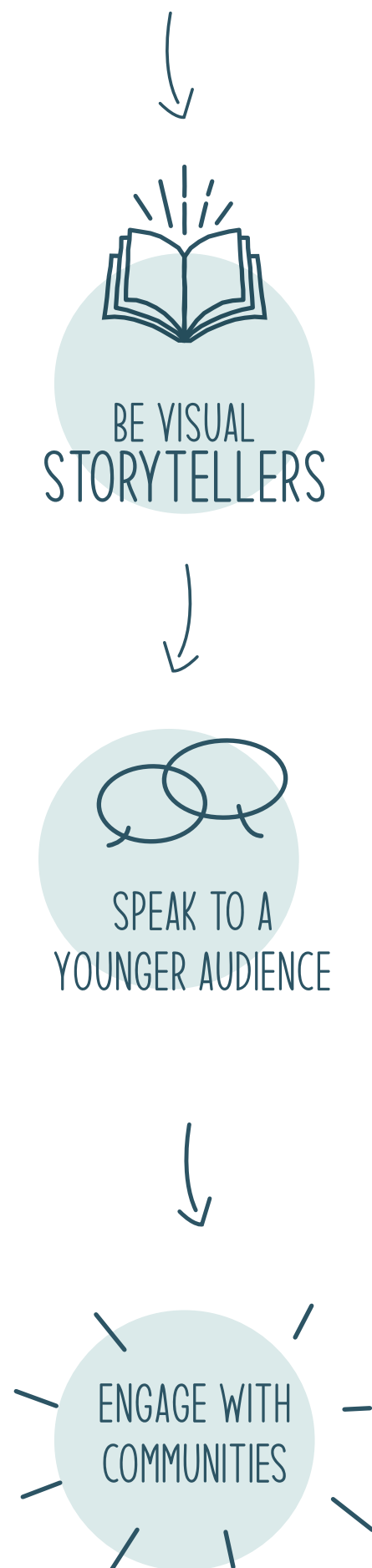
Facebook – We will continue our work to deliver our messages to the right people at the right time by taking advantage of key contacts/admins in closed community groups. We will create less but better content for our own corporate feed. With a real focus on generating conversation and engagement, this will help us to get positive results against social-media algorithms and ultimately reach a wider audience.

Twitter – We will continue to be part of the ongoing Manchester conversation, working more with partners, networks, active groups and individuals to amplify and share one another's content and adapting and responding to the news agenda as needed. Again, this will create less but better and more timely content for our own feed.

LinkedIn – We will be thought leaders and use our voice to share longer-form pieces that position us at the heart of important debates and discussions. There is a lot of potential for engagement here, particularly with the business community.

GET IT RIGHT ON ALL PLATFORMS AND WE'LL...





Instagram – We will be visual storytellers and start to carefully curate so that this channel isn't an afterthought. Instagram is the perfect place to showcase the amazing work of our studio and share images that celebrate our amazing city while getting important messages across.

Snapchat – We will target a younger audience. We have done some work during the pandemic to target a younger audience with paid activity on this platform. We will take the learning and build on this.

TikTok – Work is starting to build this channel, and we are learning how to use it appropriately and in a way that will resonate with our audience both organically and paid.

WhatsApp – Successful work has been done to create content for community networks to share on this platform during the pandemic. We will build on this and start to look at how we can use this platform centrally to get messages to our audience.

We are currently undertaking an audit of our social-media channels to gather insight on what content our audience is engaging with and how. We are tracking the volume of outbound content and comparing and contrasting this statistic against engagement metrics (such as retweets and comments). This will give us a sense of what content is working for the channels and what isn't, as well as what is encouraging them to react or take action. This will be an ongoing piece of work ingrained in our ways of working in the future, and we will include an update in our monthly dashboard. We will be constantly reviewing our delivery to make sure our messages are resonating with our audience.

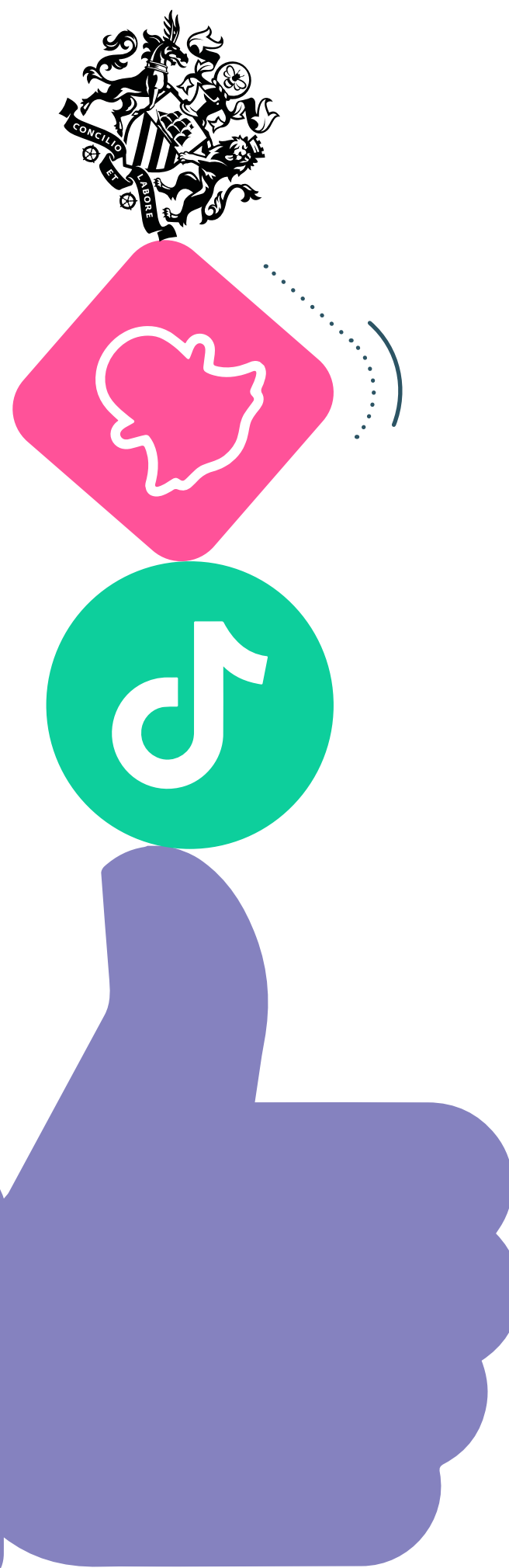
Beyond social

We will also acknowledge where social media isn't the best approach and use other communication channels when we know they will have more impact. Email marketing through Gov.delivery is a strong example of this. We will be working on improving and expanding our use of this platform alongside this strategy to ensure we are reaching all our audience in the most effective and targeted way. This platform has become increasingly important during the pandemic; we began a COVID-19 update e-bulletin in March 2020, which now has over 5,000 active subscribers. We will continue to use this digital-first approach with other key services, such as bin updates, waste and recycling information, and promotions for our residents.



3. Social listening

To be part of a conversation with our audience and ensure our messages cut through, we need to build on our social listening. Focused social listening will allow us to understand the conversations our audiences are having across social media and track key influencers and partner accounts. We are responding to these insights, so we put out content our audience wants to see, where it wants to see it. This will improve the experience of our social content and generate ideas for future campaigns. This is an area where all local authorities need to improve, and we will work hard to build on our social-listening skills here in Manchester.



Looking forward

We currently use the management tool Orlo to schedule social-media content, engage with our audience, respond to queries, and evaluate our campaigns. However, we need to utilise more of what Orlo has to offer including its social-listening tools. We will listen to what our audience is talking about (or when it comes to particularly vocal groups, what they are not talking about) and adapt what we are speaking to them about accordingly.

Learning

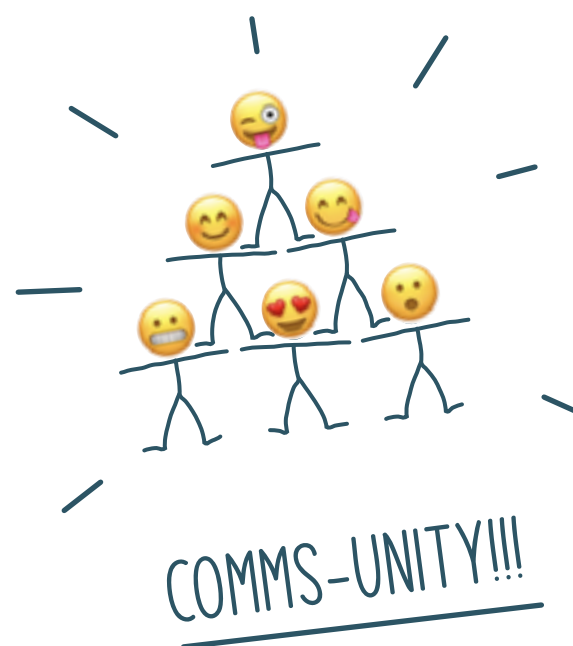
While we don't have competitors, we do need to pay attention to what our counterparts in other local authorities and more broadly in the public and private sector are doing; we also need to know what's performing well and what creative treatments they are using. This will play an important part in our ongoing social listening, enabling us to learn from other organisations with similar objectives.

To complement this, the social-media team are all members of the PRCA and of Public Sector Comms Headspace, where campaign ideas and creative approaches to social content are regularly discussed. We will also start to build relationships with social-media teams across our core cities and look at creating a space where we can share knowledge and ideas.



4. Community networks

We will continue to build meaningful relationships within our communities and not expect people to come to us. We need to go to them where they are, and use the support of our partners, community groups and peers that people trust. Although we have made some strides to do this and have started to engage our community networks, there is still a lot more to be done.



GROUPS HELP US
REALLY TARGET AUDIENCES

The power of Facebook groups

Facebook groups are a key area of focus here. COVID-19 has increased the use of and reliance on digital communications to connect, and communities have come together online to resolve neighbourhood issues and support one another where they can't physically be together. The pandemic has shown the power of community networks, the reach we have and who people trust. This is particularly notable in closed Facebook groups.

Changes to the platform's algorithms in early 2020 have also played a part in the growth of the closed Facebook group. Content from public groups is now placed into your news feed if it is relevant to things you are interested in. Groups that were once niche areas now offer an opportunity to reach far beyond their membership. The Facebook group is now a place where we can deliver impactful and targeted communications that people will take notice of – something that will carry on far beyond COVID-19 restrictions being lifted.

Facebook's own survey notes that online groups saw a significant rise in engagement in 2020:

"Just over three-quarters (76.7%) of people surveyed say the most important group they are part of now operates online (44.3% primarily online, plus 32.4% both online and offline.) Also, 70% said digital tools were very important for helping their communities thrive during the pandemic. This increased participation in online community groups is here to stay: 86% of people whose most important community group is primarily online say they'll continue engaging with that group at the same level (48%), or even more frequently (39%) over the next 12 months."

Online groups can also help foster a sense of belonging, with 98% of respondents reporting a strong sense of community and kinship within their groups.



Community engagement

We need to focus our community outreach on tailoring our messages and getting them to the audiences in these groups, as this is where people will really listen and engage. Residents in these closed groups are receptive to information shared from key members of the community, and they are more likely to engage with it than with content posted from a public-sector account. Our intention is to continue to work with community champions and the admins of these groups to build relationships that allow our messages to be shared with these communities.

The Our Manchester Engagement Framework will play an important role in this too – working with the team to develop good relationships in communities, continually learning, and measuring our success against the framework.



We will actively continue to build relationships across our neighbourhoods and community social-media accounts. We also need to build these relationships to understand what content works best for them and develop trust with the admins of these groups. We need to use the knowledge of our Neighbourhoods colleagues to give us the insight on the ground.

We have built great relationships with a number of the big Facebook community groups; they are:

- South Manchester and Wythenhawe
- Central Manchester
- North Manchester
- Wythenshawe, Chorlton Group, Didsbury
- Levy Massive, Gorton M18 Place of all Places!

While there are community Facebook groups in north Manchester, they are a lot smaller and a lot less active than the above groups. These are the main ones with the biggest followings. We have begun to work with these groups, and when we have developed a successful model with good relationships with the administrators, we can build on this work and replicate the model with more groups across the city. We do recognise that there are particular areas with issues around digital exclusion, and pockets of our communities are made up of harder-to-reach groups. We will work closely with our Neighbourhoods teams, the Our Manchester

Engagement team and partner networks on an approach to reach these areas, so we are as inclusive as we can be. We acknowledge that we need to assess each project on a case-by-case basis and develop an appropriate strategy to meet each project's objectives.

As part of our work to reach local communities through social media, we will also work closely with our Neighbourhoods colleagues running Manchester City Council Twitter accounts. This will ensure that they have key campaign information and the skills and knowledge to share this with audiences in their local areas.

COMMUNITY
CHAMPIONS
ARE MIGHTY!

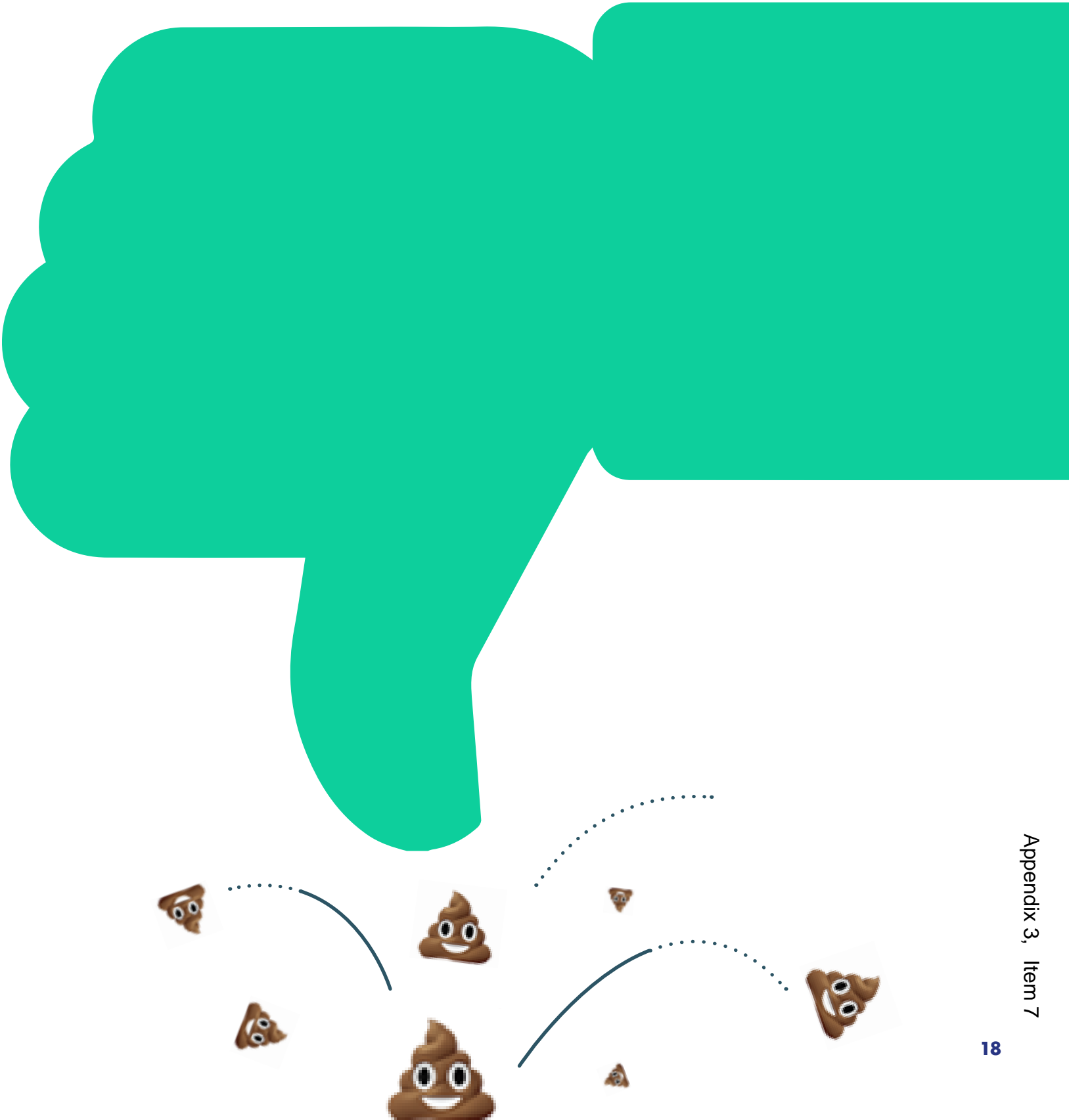


5. Myth-busting and misinformation

The Coronavirus pandemic has shed light on the amount of misinformation shared across social media. We've seen this in the form of myths and conspiracy theories about the virus, and through the anti-vax rhetoric discussed widely on all platforms. As a public service we have a responsibility to ensure that inaccurate and misleading comments on our posts are dealt with appropriately and we aren't providing a space for people to spread misinformation or fake news. We recognise people's freedom of speech and don't censor our social media when we see a comment we simply disagree with, but where comments are perpetuating a damaging narrative; for instance about the safety of the Covid vaccine we have a responsibility to hide comments and block users where we feel appropriate, as well as reporting users where necessary. We will also use our social listening and evaluation tools to gauge what our residents are discussing, giving us a chance to myth-bust through proactive content.

We will continue to counter misinformation through the regular community toolkits we share with local groups, offering accurate information and graphics that can be easily shared through their own channels, eg. WhatsApp – a platform where we know the sharing of misinformation is particularly rife.

COMBAT THE
SPREADING
OF
MISINFORMATION



6. Partners and influencers

As a council we work closely with a number of partners across Greater Manchester – GMP, TfGM, the GMCA, and health teams including MHCC and the GMHSC Partnership. We work closely with businesses and charitable organisations in the city and also support and amplify the content of other Council social accounts, including our libraries, galleries and neighbourhood ward accounts.

We are part of a network of partners who work together to improve the lives of people in Manchester, and closely monitoring our partner channels for content we can amplify and engage with is an important part of our social-media approach. We will not be afraid to retweet or share a campaign rather than post the content ourselves. We achieve the same thing by retweeting a post, and in doing so we are supporting partners who will in turn support our future campaigns. We will move away from automatically scheduling large packs of social-media assets sent to us by partners, and look at smarter ways of working together and supporting one other.



Strong working relationships

We will work smarter to organise our feeds into a mixture of good-quality original content and carefully thought through retweets and shares. We will actively engage with key partners to help support the delivery of our messages and support the delivery of theirs. Where appropriate we can add our voice to the conversation 'quote retweeting' or by sharing a comment on Facebook. This function gives us the chance to share valuable content with our audience while joining the conversation ourselves and explaining why it is relevant to our audience.



Working closely with partners means we also have access to multiple voices on social media, and we can use these to our advantage to deliver messages to our audience in different ways. For example, we would choose to retweet Greater Manchester Police warnings about the dangers of illegal raves rather than posting these messages ourselves. GMP have a harder and more enforcement-focused tone of voice, and on this occasion amplifying their messages rather than posting our own would be a more powerful and effective way of getting the message across.

We will also focus our attention on key influencers within the social-media community: people who will be advocates for our content by adding their voice to the conversation to amplify our messages. We will do this by closely monitoring their content and the kinds of issues they are talking about and asking them to support our content, where appropriate.



Our list of partners and accounts we amplify is extensive, but here is a snapshot:

- GMCA
- TfGM
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
- Manchester Health and Care Commissioning
- GMHSC Partnership
- CityCo
- Marketing Manchester
- Manchester Piccadilly
- The University of Manchester
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Visit Manchester
- MIF
- Manchester Pride
- Greater.jobs
- Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce.



On top of these we are actively building relationships across the independent sector with voluntary groups, support services and charities that support our aims and our people.

Some of these are:

- McrActive
- Shelter
- Jobcentre Plus
- Recycle for Greater Manchester
- One Manchester
- Mustard Tree
- Caribbean African Health Network
- Climate Emergency Manchester
- Bread and Butter Thing
- Coffee4Craig
- MACC
- Young Manchester
- Manchester Youth Lives
- The Growth Company
- LGBT Foundation
- FareShare Greater Manchester
- Booth Centre.

7. Social-media specialists

To establish this unique and recognisable tone of voice on social media and successfully evaluate and gather insight, we have remodelled the structure of our social-media team and how we work. To drive engagement we have recognised we need dedicated social-media specialists gatekeeping our channels. This is crucial to the success of this strategy.

While we have generic role profiles across our team, we have recognised that there is value in 'specialists' with skills focused on particular areas of communications. We have social media specialists within the marketing team and we need to use their strengths to ensure our social media channels are effectively managed.



WE'LL

MAKE

OUR

POSTS

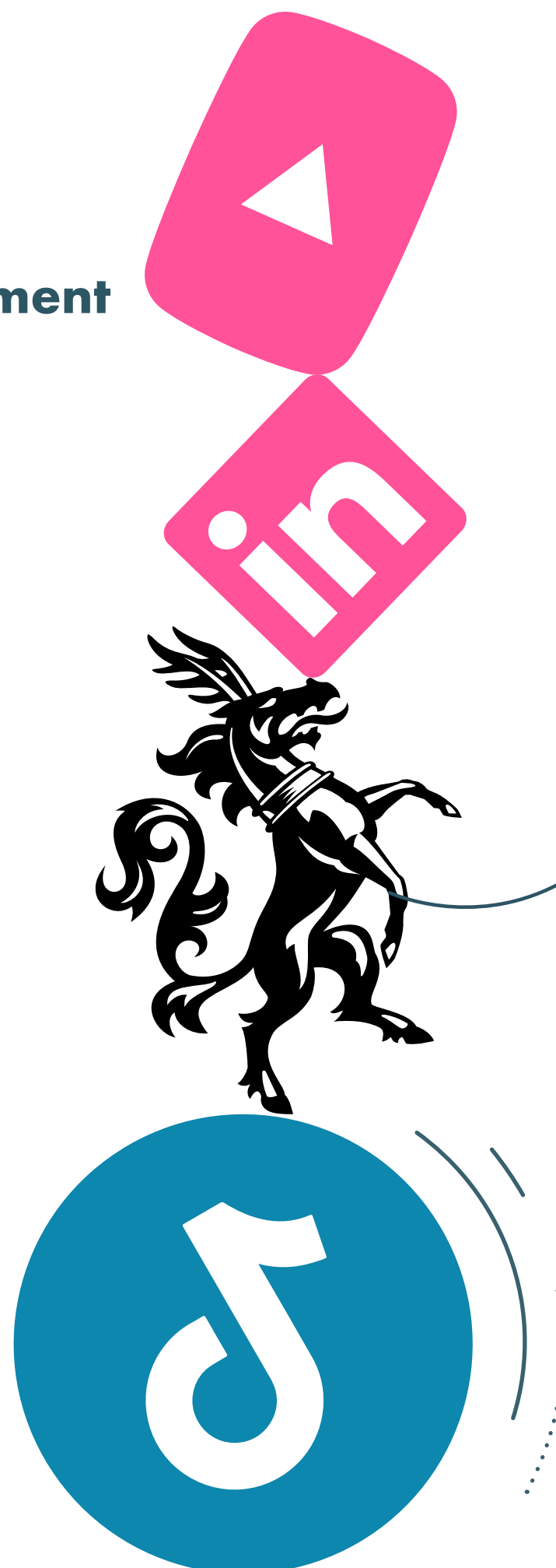
MAGIC

Having all social-media content coming through specialists will ensure consistency and get us closer to reaching our objectives. We have specialists who live and breathe social media, who at any point can tell us what is and what isn't being talked about in Manchester, what's performing well on our channels and what conversations we need to get involved in. They are genuinely interested in social media and will take content and adapt its style and tone so it's right for our audience. They won't be afraid to tell the team if something isn't going to work, and they will always look for the most creative treatment for a piece of content.

Social-media specialists will ensure consistency and a real chance to properly establish our tone of voice. Without this kind of consistency, our tone of voice will be diluted and we may struggle to grow engagement on our channels.

8. Training and development

Training and ongoing development of the team continues to be an important part of implementing our strategy. Our social-media specialists are committed to ongoing professional development to keep abreast of trends and changes across the world of social media so we can continue to adapt and improve our approach.



As a team we have already committed to expanding our knowledge with the Social Media Managers Academy course and with members of the team taking on apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships in digital marketing. We have also been making the most of numerous free webinars and workshops for social-media professionals that have been taking place during the pandemic; we will continue to take these opportunities as they arise, as well as make the most of training available through our PRCA membership.

WE CAN ALL
LEARN A FEW NEW
TRICKS, YOU KNOW!

DON'T KEEP IT
TO YOURSELF!

We will share insights from any training with the wider team and ensure we are clearly demonstrating how we are putting this training into practice. We will also use our knowledge to share tips and training with councillors and colleagues across the Council who run their own social-media channels.



9. Content creation

We are lucky enough to have an incredibly talented design studio on hand to support us in creating impressive content for social media, including graphics, animations and videos. Over the years, our studio has created some amazing creative product that has performed well on social media, but it is important to acknowledge that this approach to content isn't a failsafe way of ensuring great engagement.

We can work with our designers to create a highly polished piece of content that then doesn't perform very well, while an off-the-cuff comment, GIF or graphic created with CANVA can spark great conversation and engagement. It really comes down to our social-media team knowing when we need something polished and when something simpler will do the same job. The quality in our 'quality over quantity' approach could be a humorous thread drafted up quickly to explain an issue, or a video interview crudely shot on a mobile phone. The 'quality' is in these posts being well timed and targeted to the right audience in the right place at the right time. Sometimes we may not even need to create or draft anything; simply having an awareness of what is trending and happening around us could be enough for us to jump in and spark great conversation.

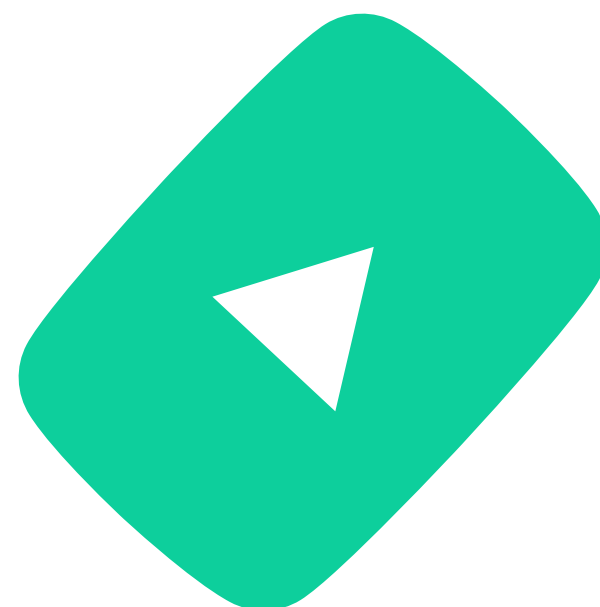
We will also work closely with our colleagues in the Contact Centre, using monthly meetings to understand the queries and concerns they have received from the public, and using these insights to inform and adapt our content.

Content-sharing

We work closely with services across the Council to share content, and this is something we will continue to build on. We will make the most of content other services create, eg. imagery and videos of our amazing parks, case studies from our Children's Services and Work and Skills colleagues, and the wealth of content created by our Libraries and Galleries teams. This is valuable content that we have readily available, and we are supporting and augmenting the work of our colleagues by sharing it. We will also continue to share the content we create with other Council teams in the form of toolkits that include messages and graphics easily shared with colleagues in services, which they can use on their own social channels to reach communities. We will also create content specifically for other groups to use where we know we want to reach their audience, the content we create won't always feature our logo or be identifiable as ours.



The Council has recently launched a brand-new intranet. We are working to explore how we can share our social-media content through the new platform. It will enable us to share content with our staff, giving them access to key messages and allowing them to share our content. Not only will they be able to do this in their roles as Council staff, but also as Manchester residents, as we know that half of our workforce live in the city.



Working at the council

Annual and flex leave

Health and Wellbeing

Starters and leavers



10. Paid-for social posts

Paid-for social posts or adverts are an undeniably important way of making a strong impact on our audience. The sheer volume of voices on social media combined with the battle against algorithms means organic posting alone is no longer enough to keep our audience mindful of our messages. Paid-for social posts allow us to target the specific people who we want to read a specific message. They are also a much cheaper way of reaching our target audience than traditionally printed home advertising, and are clearly measurable through evaluation data.



Value for money

Paid-for social posts will continue to be an important part of our social-media approach, but it is important that we use them strategically. We shouldn't be putting money behind poor-quality content as a quick way of reaching more people, or boosting a post simply because it hasn't performed very well. Any paid-for content needs to be high quality and engaging to ensure a return on our investment.

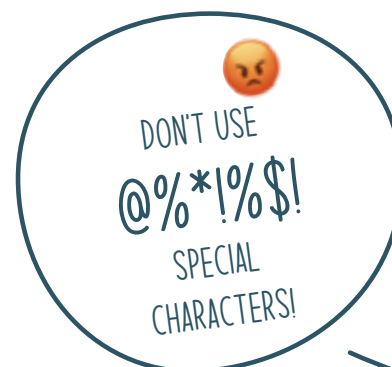


11. Accessibility, equality and diversity

Manchester has many diverse communities and it is crucial that our social-media content can be accessed and understood by them all, including those people with a visual, hearing, speech, motor, cognitive or other impairment. We are already taking steps to ensure our social-media content is accessible, such as by adding subtitles to all our video content and writing social-media posts in plain English. However, we need to build on this and continue improving accessibility to ensure we aren't alienating any of our audience.

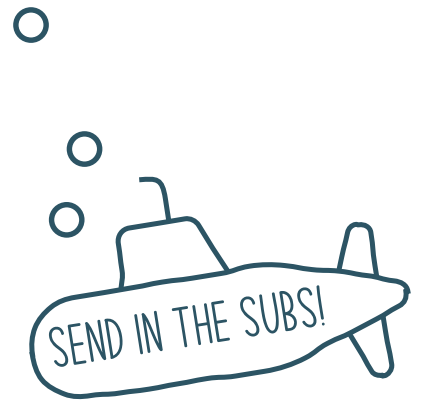
We recognise that this will be an ongoing challenge as new platforms and technologies emerge, and we will need to adapt as people's needs change. We may not get it 100% right every time, but through ongoing training and development we will make a commitment to adopting good habits and following emerging best practice.

MAKE IT
WORK
FOR
EVERYONE!



We commit to:

- Ensuring all video content is subtitled
- Applying best practice on font sizes and colour contrast when designing video captions
- Using the alt text function on Orlo to ensure any important information in an image is described in alternative text for visually impaired users. (This is particularly important when sharing quote tiles created in Canva featuring a lot of text we are unable to include in the accompanying social-media post)
- Working closely with our studio to ensure any creative product designed for social-media campaigns meets accessibility guidelines
- Using plain English, simplifying messages and keeping sentences as short as possible
- Avoiding large chunks of text and using line breaks in our social-media posts to spread out our copy and make it easier to read
- Avoiding using bold, italicised or capitalised text in our posts; this can make things more difficult to read
- Avoiding using non-standard symbols, eg. mathematical symbols, as substitutes for words and messages – these can confuse screen-reading software.



REPRESENT AND CELEBRATE OUR AMAZING COMMUNITIES!

During our response to the COVID-19 pandemic we have also been creating more translated pieces of content in different languages, including British Sign Language, as well as creating audio content. This has allowed more of our communities to access vital information, and this is something we will continue to focus and build on. We have been working with partners including Breakthrough UK to provide accessible formats for residents with learning disabilities. We plan to identify training and development solutions within our team to support this work in the future, and understand best practice in these areas.

We work hard to ensure our social-media messages speak to all our residents and our diverse communities across Manchester. In order to ensure our social-media messages are resonating with our audience, our audience need to be able to see themselves represented and celebrated in our content. We are committed to integrating diversity, equity and inclusion into all our social-media campaigns.

We will do this by:

- Using imagery on social media that reflects the diversity within our city, including race, gender, age, disability and sexual orientation
- Continuing to build on our use of translated materials in our communications, including the use of British Sign Language
- Marking and celebrating a range of religious moments and cultural festivals.



12. Evaluation

We know evaluation is vital to demonstrate the value and impact of our work in Communications, and this same thinking needs to be applied to our social-media campaigns. Social media is fast-paced and reactive, but we need to take the time to pause and reflect on our outputs, to ensure they are meeting the objectives of this strategy as well as our Communications and organisational objectives as a whole.

Historically, we have shared reports detailing lots of numbers: retweets, shares, likes and interactions. Yet it's arguable that these methods of measurement don't mean very much if we can't put a number on what 'good engagement' is. We can certainly highlight 'good engagement for us' and figures definitely have their place. We should be highlighting when posts have received a notable amount of likes or shares, but we will move beyond vanity metrics and start compiling reports with tangible examples of the real impact our social-media content is having and how this informs our work in the future.



IT'S NOT JUST
ABOUT NUMBERS
YOU KNOW.

As part of our ongoing work informed by this strategy, we will provide monthly dashboard reports. These will measure:

- Positive conversations we've had and the outcomes of these
- Resolution of issues, both in the social-media inbox and publicly
- 'Brand' sentiment – the trust people show us, their attitude and the feelings they have about us
- Direct actions as a result of social content – link clicks, sign-ups etc
- Content highlights – what worked, what didn't, and why
- 'Competitor' analysis – what have our counterparts done well or not so well that month?
- Who has been talking about us and what have they been saying – informed by social listening
- How we have worked with members, Council teams and colleagues
- How we have supported partners and how they have supported us
- How we have worked with influencers and advocates
- How we have worked with closed community groups
- Investment and impact of paid activity.

Finishing up!

Conclusion: Where we'll be

This strategy is ambitious, and embodies the Our Manchester behaviours.

We are proud of Manchester and passionate about the work we do. The social-media landscape is fluid and this strategy should be too. We will review and update it every six months. We will listen to our audience, learning and responding by adapting our approach when we need to. Through social media we will continue to build relationships and start conversations to improve the lives of everyone who visits, lives in or works in Manchester.

WE'LL KEEP
↓
LISTENING,
↓
REVIEWING,
↓
LEARNING
↓
& RESPONDING



AND WE'LL GET IT RIGHT, BECAUSE

WE LOVE IT!!!

AND WE'LL KNOW IF
WE'RE DOING OKAY 🤔

We will measure our success against the following outcomes:

- More engaged audiences, wherever and whoever they are
- Dedicated social-media team organising our channels and sharing skills and knowledge with the wider team
- A reduced amount of content being shared on every channel, leaving our corporate channels less confused and cluttered – using our channels in the right way for the right messages
- Increased traffic from social media to Manchester.gov.uk

- Proactively working with others to organise and share our content – partners, influencers and trusted community figures
- Open and ongoing conversations with key advocates in community Facebook groups
- Engagement and discussion around Council messages in community Facebook groups
- Behaviour changes as a result of our social-media campaigns, eg. recycling/quitting smoking
- Greater trust of the Council and our messages – measured by sentiment-tracking and social listening.





MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

April 2021



Strategic Communications Monthly Dashboard

December 2021

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Covid Omicron Variant

What we did

- Sharing information and UK Health Security Agency assets about the Government's Plan B measures to combat the spread of the Omicron variant with community groups through weekly Covid toolkits
- Developing assets for social media about regular LFD testing advice around Christmas shopping and parties
- Developing information about the Omicron variant and community testing offer in alternative formats and languages for community groups to share, including a webinar and Covid classroom video assets by Manchester's NHS health professionals

Manchester Test and Trace

Help prevent the spread of the new Omicron COVID-19 variant by:

-  – Vaccines are our best protection against COVID-19 including new variants. So please get your Covid vaccinations and booster jabs as soon as it is offered to you
-  – Wear face coverings in most public places and on public transport, unless exempt
-  – Letting fresh air in if you meet indoors. Meeting outdoors is safer
-  – Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or hand sanitiser
-  – Wiping down surfaces (handles, doors etc)
-  – Having a PCR test if you have COVID-19 symptoms, and self-isolating if required

 If you are a contact of someone with the Omicron variant you will be contacted and asked to self isolate for 10 days, regardless of your vaccination status. This includes those aged under 18.

Please continue to use rapid lateral flow tests before:

- Entering crowded or enclosed places
- Meeting people at risk of illness
- Remember if you're going to a nightclub or large event you may be asked to show your Covid pass

Remember

You still need to have tests and follow Covid safety advice even after you've been vaccinated. If you are a parent or carer of a secondary school child, please also agree to testing through the school, because it is very important – even over the holidays

Help and support

Manchester Covid Helpline – Call free on 0800 234 6123 or text: 07890 036 892. Service is for anyone with Covid-19 questions, who needs help with booking vaccination or testing appointments, has questions on when to self isolate. Advice is provided by a nursing team. Translation service available. Open 7 days a week 9am-5pm

Manchester's Community Response Hub - Open Mon to Fri, 9am-5pm
Freephone: 0800 234 6123 text: 078600 22876 email: COVIDSupport@manchester.gov.uk. For support with managing fuel top-up payments, food, medication and help with loneliness

Manchester Gateway - Call 0800 092 4020 / 0161 947 0770 to book your Covid vaccination and to book a free taxi if you need help getting to your vaccination appointment

Support to self isolate

There is a lot of help and support if you do test positive, including money to help people:
manchester.gov.uk/selfisolationpaymentscheme

 manchester.gov.uk/coronavirus 

Go with the Lateral Flow before your Christmas Party





Q&A with David Regan, Director of Public Health for Manchester and Dr Manisha Kumar, Medical Director of Manchester Health and Care Commissioning and Helena Vesty of the Manchester Evening News (MEN)

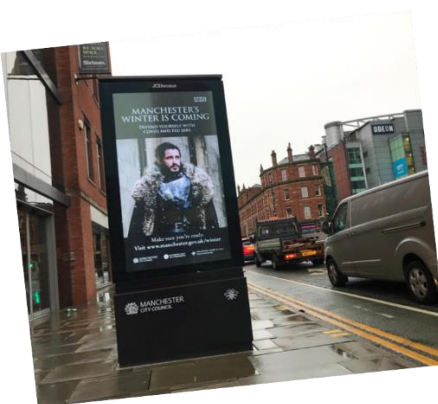
Outcomes

- Interview arranged with BBC Radio Manchester and Dr Cordelle Ofori on the Omicron situation in the city and what steps were being taken to mitigate its spread
- MEN Webinar – Your questions answered. 13,000 views on the first day of broadcast
- Community Webinar – Your questions answered
- New films from Dr Cordelle Ofori – Covid Classroom, along with script on key messages sent to the British Muslim Heritage Centre and other groups for them to produce their own films and materials
- Community Omicron printed materials translated into 16 different languages, British Sign Language and Easy Read documents. Shared through the weekly community toolkits with community partners, health professionals etc.

Covid Vaccine and Booster Programme

What we did

- Continued to develop the Winter Warrior campaign to promote Covid and flu jabs taken up across the city
- Weekly toolkits of Covid messages with content from community messages / UKHSA campaign assets
- Assets shared with community partners, Neighbourhood and Compliance Teams
- Targeted campaigns for each age group were encouraged to come forward for booster jabs included using:
 - social media posts / paid ads on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat
 - digital screens
 - website copy
 - mobile phone direct advertising
 - media relations
 - radio ads
 - advertising and editorial in local publications
 - life-sized cut-outs of the Manchester Jon Snow character at key locations



Outcomes

- Messaging about vaccinations was seen 631,647 times in December, receiving 2,504 likes, 965 shares / retweets and 975 link clicks
- When we started the Winter Warrior campaign on 18 October 2021 to boost take up of Covid vaccinations in the city – 62.6% of people had had first dose of Covid vaccine; 55.6% had the second dose; and 3.9% had the booster jab

By 7 December 2021:

- 65.4% of people had first dose of Covid vaccine. This is an increase of 2.8%
- 58% of people had the second dose of Covid vaccine. This is an increase of 2.4%
- 18.7% of people had the booster jab. This is an increase of 14.8%
- Mobile phone advertising – We targeted ward areas in Manchester using GPS to serve ads to the right people in the right location. The campaign resulted in 4,395 link clicks and 416,069 impressions
- Global Dax radio ads – Four radio ads encouraged people to become winter warriors and protect the city by getting vaccinated. Each advert featured a different character for each target audience. 355,971 impressions were delivered. Listen through rate was 94.9%
- The Christmas period saw a focus on advertising vaccination clinics alongside the use of national campaign assets in order to respond to changing availability and priorities, such as those returning home for Christmas. For example, our tweet advertising the vaccine push at the Etihad Mass Vaccination Centre had around 23,000 impressions on Twitter
- We also produced bespoke graphics to show how many people in the city had been vaccinated and advertised each day's available clinics, which continued to be shared across our channels
- Across other channels, our Facebook post advertising the free cab service for those who needed it reached 107,400

Support available through Christmas and the Covid helpline

What we did

- Developed assets and messages for social media and community communications channels to show when support services such as the Covid helpline and Community response hub were available over Christmas
- The key information about Covid support services was shared in a Christmas community toolkit



Outcomes

Christmas Community toolkit shared with Neighbourhood Teams and voluntary sector groups included:

- Vaccination Programme - How to access your jab (including JabCabs)
- Community Response Hub - Opening times over Christmas
- Covid - General advice
- Manchester Covid Helpline support for booking vaccinations, testing and general Covid advice
- Lateral Flow Test information
- Community Webinar - Your questions answered
- MEN Webinar - Your questions answered

Christmas campaign

What we did

- Promotion across City Council social media accounts, website and city centre digital screens
- Messages and assets sent to partners across Greater Manchester
- 36 proactive campaign posts through December for Christmas Markets, Winter Gardens and Skate Manchester
- Six proactive press releases – 188 pieces of coverage about or mentioning the Christmas Markets or attractions in Manchester
- Design and print for markets:
 - 470 wayfinding signs
 - 100 Covid safety panels designed and delivered, requested by Public Health
 - 5,000 beer mats
 - 245 signs promoting mugs
- TikTok channel tested out on launch day of Winter Gardens (6,000 views)



Christmas Market mugs

- Designed and printed 40,000 Glühwein and 40,000 coffee mugs
- The mugs were produced without a date due to the uncertainties around COVID-19, however they completely sold out weeks before the markets closed

Outcomes

- 2,449 visits to MCC's Christmas webpage, 800 of these directly from the 36 organic social media posts
- 5,591 visits to MCC's Christmas Markets webpage
- 4,564 visits to the new Winter Gardens webpages
- Over 314,390 impressions across the campaign on our social media channels
- 430 uses of #MCRChristmas on Instagram

Christmas waste and recycling

What we did

- Toolkit sent to community groups, housing partners, councillors and Neighbourhoods staff. This included social media and graphics, suggested web / newsletter content and A4 poster about how to recycle Christmas trees
- Paid-for Facebook posts targeted at those living in postcode areas Biffa identified as most likely to recycle their Christmas trees based on the past year's stats
- Organic social media – Facebook and Twitter content about bin dates and tips on recycling everything from wrapping paper to trees
- Govdelivery / BINFO email detailing no change in bin dates and tips on recycling
- E-bulletin piece as part of the main Christmas edition
- Forum piece to internal staff
- Webpage detailing bin dates and [recycling tips at Christmas](#)
- Web banner on waste and recycling landing page signposting to Christmas bins webpage



Outcomes

- Organic social stats: five tweets, five Facebook posts:
 - 45,758 impressions
 - 147 link clicks
 - 14 comments
 - 101 likes
 - 77 shares / retweets
- Paid-for Facebook – 117,142 impressions, 172 link clicks
- Web stats – 788 webpage views:
 - Average time spent on page, 2 mins 33 seconds
 - 48% of visitors came via other pages on our website (most likely the web banner)
 - 20% came via search engines
 - 2% via Govdelivery emails and the rest via social media
- E-bulletin – Delivered to more than 25,000 residents
- BINFO – Delivered to 2,169 residents:
 - 68% open rate
 - 2% click rate
- Toolkit sent to more than 160 community contacts
- Waste and recycling stats will not be known until the end of January as Christmas tree collections continue throughout the month

Water Safety Christmas campaign

What we did

- Fonemedia ads targeting people in areas of Manchester city centre, closest to bars near water. The advert appeared in apps and web browsers of people using their phones in the targeted areas
- Ads aimed at 18-30-year olds (age group most likely to end up in the water on a night out according to national stats)
- The ads appear when people are in apps and through their web browsers. A link was included in the ads for people to click through to the Manchester Water Safety Partnership (MSP) website
- We have responsibility for the news stories that appear on the MWSP website
- Shared social media about water safety from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

Outcomes

- Fonemedia advert seen by 39,642 people
- 875 clicked through from the ad to the MWSP website
- Website had 2,027 visitors, up 24% on November. 75% of those came directly (not using search engines)



Homelessness / Real Change

What we did

- Social Media
- City Centre digital screens
- E-bulletin



Outcomes

- Our Real Change MCR support has had a significant impact. In November, the fund only raised £240 once we were promoting again (digital screens have been in use across and around the city centre). **This jumped to £3,100 in December**

State of the City Report

What we did

- Studio designed the annual State of the City Report, bringing the data to life and making it easier to understand
- The final designed pdf was created to be fully accessible and inclusive
- Social media messaging - First message was sent on 9 December 2021. Last message will be sent on 2 February 2022

Outcomes

- 20 messages across Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
- 1.7 million reached
- 509 total clicks
- 107.1k impressions
- 225 total likes
- 45 comments
- 92 shares

Levenshulme and Burnage consultation scheme

What we did

The consultation is ongoing until 30 January 2022. A multi-channel campaign was targeted at the Levenshulme and Burnage areas, which included:

- Manchester City Council(MCC) website
- Social messages across Facebook (both organic and targeted), and Twitter (main MCC account and local area accounts)
- Fonemedia digital targeted advertising
- Press releases
- Manchester Evening News 'Your Area' ads
- Posters and printed plans in local area venues
- Targeted mailing (in multiple languages)
- Local FM radio ads in English, Cantonese, Farsi, Urdu and Punjabi
- InStream (Bauer's digital audio advertising platform), with ads on Hits Radio website and digital radio ads





Examples of MCC social media posts encouraging Levenshulme and Burnage residents to have their say and the outcomes of previous consultation stages

Outcomes

As this consultation is still live (there have been **667 consultation responses** as of 25 January 2022), these stats are 'To Date'. The social media outcomes were every encouraging:

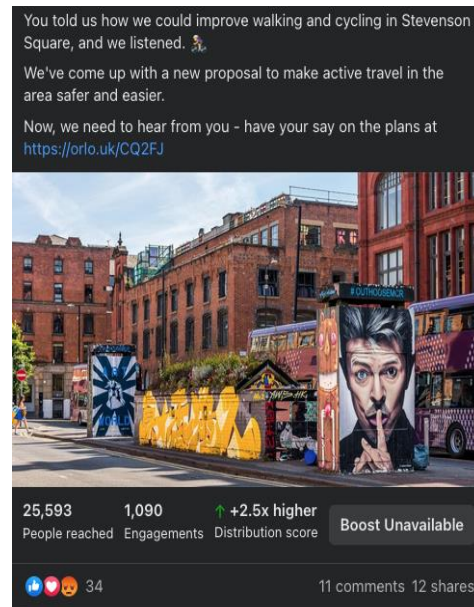
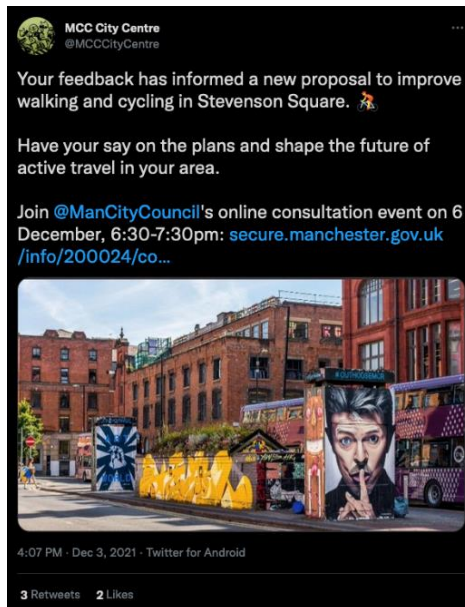
- Twitter
 - 21,058 impressions
 - 34 retweets
 - 58 likes
 - 182 link clicks
- Facebook
 - 81,284 reach
 - 42 shares
 - 162 likes
 - 1,011 link clicks
- Fonemedia
 - 1,411,000 impressions
 - 8,466 clicks
 - 0.60% click through rate (national average is 0.15%)

Northern Quarter Area 2 Stevenson Square consultation

What we did

An online consultation was conducted around the proposed changes to Stevenson Square (the consultation closed on 21 December 2021). The consultation was advertised through:

- MCC website
- Press release
- Printed booklet for residents of the Northern Quarter
- Targeted social campaign across Facebook and Twitter



Examples of MCC social media posts encouraging Stevenson Square users to have their say

Outcomes

Once this consultation closed, there had been **490 consultation responses**, as well as our social media outcomes:

- Twitter
 - 29,242 impressions from the main MCC account
 - 18 retweets
 - 40 likes
 - 243 link clicks
- Facebook
 - 50,416 reach
 - 14 shares
 - 67 likes
 - 526 link clicks

Our Town Hall

What we did

- 12 days of Christmas social media content with various Town Hall artefacts displayed



Outcomes

- 88,975 impressions
- 1,419 likes
- 65 shares / retweets
- 66 link clicks

Northwards Housing Operations

What we did

- Tenant Recruitment Campaign
 - We soft-launched our Housing Advisory Committee recruitment campaign. We wanted to attract residents living in MCC properties to volunteer as part of the committee and have a greater influence on how their housing service is run
 - The target number of registrations based on previous campaigns is 75. The campaign will launch more widely in January but got off to a good start with an initial e-bulletin resulting in **20 tenants registering their interest in a little over 24 hours**, which is encouraging
 - Work in December focused on producing copy and materials for the launch, including video, letters, social media posts, email, texts and web content



Interview with Sara Orme, our Customer Service Centre manager, who – as a Manchester social housing tenant volunteers for her own landlord’s committee – was able to offer a unique perspective on the opportunity

- Safeguarding
 - We launched 'Trust Your Instinct', our annual internal safeguarding campaign, reinforcing the training our resident-facing staff receive. As well as posters reminding staff of the key message to trust their instincts and raise referrals when they feel that something's amiss, we also highlighted the excellent work of the team who act upon those reports
 - Our Tenancy Support Team have some great case studies that demonstrate the enormous impact referrals can make in getting vulnerable residents the help they need. We filmed the team, as well as some of our colleagues who've made referrals, to capture some of those stories, and ran them as part of our weekly bulletins to all housing staff.



Steve Bone, Northwards Support & Wellbeing Officer, explains how a surveyor's referral helped a child to escape an abusive home.

- Christmas Foodbank Collection
 - Alex Connolly, one of our neighbourhood housing officers, co-ordinated a donation drive to collect Christmas goodies for two local foodbanks (Humans MCR and The Chatterbox Project). We supported her efforts through our internal bulletins and staff were very generous. Our estate caretaking team transported the food over and we got a lovely response on Facebook for everyone's generosity



Outcomes

- Northwards Website
 - 6,702 page views
 - 13,063 sessions
- Web Portal
 - 4,875 registered users
 - 40,805 page views
 - 12,033 sessions
 - 4,181 rent payments by 1,682 tenancies
- December capped off a quarter that, in total, saw significant rises in some of our online interactions:
 - Rent payments increased by 18% and the **number of tenancies making payments increased by 6%**
 - The number of online repair requests increased by 16% to our second-highest ever total (2,291)
 - The total of all other customer service interactions we received hit **2,489 - the second highest number we've ever had**
- Facebook
 - 2,762 likes
 - 8,401 reach
 - 40 shares
 - 200 likes and reactions
 - 46 comments
- Twitter
 - 6,078 followers
 - 8,200 impressions (266 per day)
 - 241 engagements

Media highlights this month

- The News and Media Team handled more than 100 reactive media enquiries in December
- The team also distributed 30 proactive press releases aligned to the Council's priorities and generated over 300 pieces of coverage about or mentioning the Council

Proactive media

- New Leader, Councillor Bev Craig – We marked the passing of the mantle from Sir Richard Leese to Cllr Bev Craig as new Leader of the Council. The team set up a range of interviews with Cllr Craig to 'land' her as new Leader, including the Manchester Evening News, Guardian, Place North West, Hits Radio, Capital FM, Radio Manchester, Granada and BBC Politics North
- Covid-19 continues – The pandemic continues to be a major area of work for the News and Media Team. In December, a number of proactive media opportunities were managed to drive vaccine take up, including:
 - Booster Programme (plus waiting times)
 - Free cabs to vaccine clinics in communities
 - One year on from first Covid vaccinations, a celebratory piece thanking people for doing their part to manage the spread of the virus
 - Walk-in centres open for over 40s
- Zero Carbon Social Housing – Media work to highlight and celebrate the UK's first Zero Carbon Social Housing completion in partnership with One Manchester. The properties in east Manchester were part of a wider low carbon development in Beswick. Coverage included the Manchester Evening News, BBC Radio Manchester, Place North West and Insider Media amongst others. Video content generated by the team was watched more than 16,000 times

- See Myself in Books – Finally, a lovely piece of work to highlight a project that increases the number of books that include black, Asian and minority ethnic people so that young people of different backgrounds see themselves in literature. The story gained coverage on BBC online, Manchester TV and BBC North West tonight

Reactive media

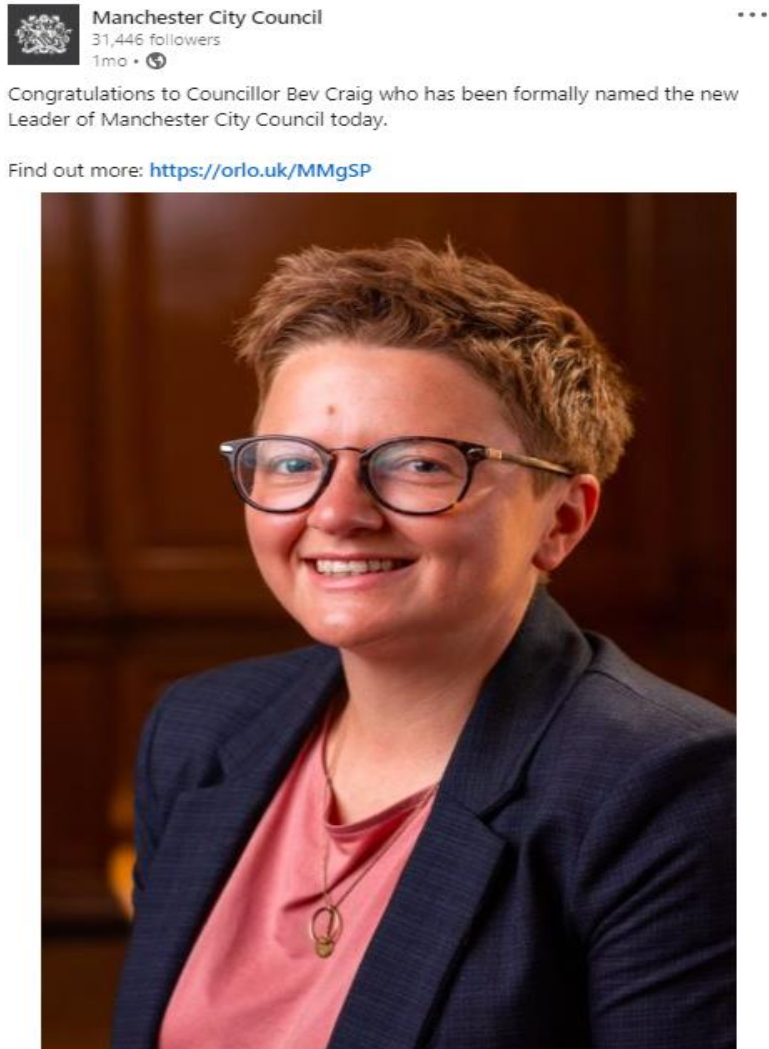
The proactive pieces – particularly Covid-19 – garnered a host of reactive enquiries for the team to manage. However, we have been highlighted some as particularly time consuming and visible reactive stories:

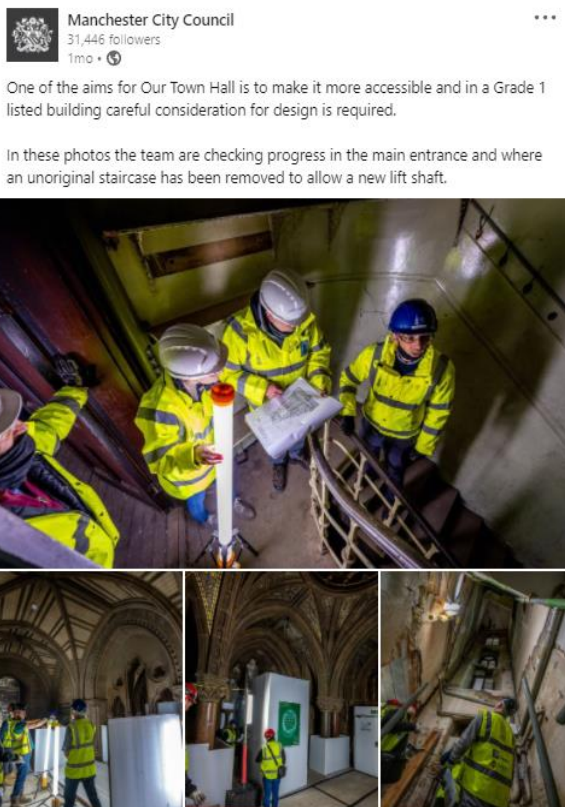
- Save the Hough End Fields campaign
- Levenshulme and Burnage Active Travel Neighbourhood

Both issues are long-running campaigns with strong-willed groups for and against the two projects. The team has been managing the on-going complaints about the programmes of work, providing clear timelines of where the projects are up to, with robust rationales of why the projects are important. However, in December, both were still subject to ongoing consultations and the responses to the stories reflected the fact that final proposals for the project were yet to be agreed

Christmas Heroes in Social Care – The team worked closely with the BBC to celebrate social care workers that were working through the Christmas period to support residents in care homes or at homes. Despite numerous false starts to get this story off the ground and ensure Manchester was prominent (while also finding a suitable and willing homecare worker), the piece was positive and acted as a real celebration of the work done by Council commissioned staff.

Social Media highlights this month





10:02 AM · Dec 23, 2021 · Orlo



Social Media – Engagement Analytics



Facebook – 1,290 inbound messages, 314 conversations, 95,762 followers (up 66)



LinkedIn – 40 inbound messages, 10 conversations, 31,123 followers (up 375)



Manchester City Council – 206 assigned messages, 3,330 messages actioned



Instagram – 250 inbound messages, 219 conversations, 18,465 followers (up 185)



Twitter – 2,744 inbound messages, 1,553 conversations, 194,974 followers (up 810)

Digital Media – E-bulletin

What we covered

- Cancellation of New Year's Eve firework display
- Covid Boosters – How to get yours
- Levenshulme and Burnage Active Travel Neighbourhood (ATN) consultation now live



E-bulletin stats

- Sent to 26,188 recipients (down eight subscribers since November)
- 43% open rate (-5% since November)

Outcomes

- Most clicked link: [Levenshulme and Burnage ATN consultation goes live](#)
- Total unique clicks – 201
- Total number of clicks – 254

Digital Communications – Web

Read our [full monthly activity report](#) for December

Activity

- Household support fund form – The government announced a new winter payment scheme for residents. We built the pages with the details for residents as well as put together an application form for the discretionary elements of this scheme
- Community events and funding application – The service requested we added the guidance and application as downloads. We advised that these documents were inaccessible and built the SmartSurvey application and HTML pages, detailing the guidance and application details for the service
- Heaton Park volunteering content – The team at Heaton Park sent through amends to their volunteering content as well as an updated application for volunteers. There were two downloadable applications for individual and corporate volunteers, which we combined to create one accessible web form for all types of volunteer applicants

December in numbers

- Page views – 1,115,712
- Transactions – 23,337
- Cost – £3,967.29
- Potential savings – £434k
- Business as usual tasks completed – 6,648

Most popular pages

1. COVID-19 restrictions
2. Bin collection dates
3. COVID-19 landing page
4. Council Tax landing page
5. Pay your Council Tax
6. My Account
7. Heaton Park
8. Bins, rubbish and recycling

Intranet

- Engagement events:
 - Follow up to feedback received. We know a large percentage of users are struggling to log onto the site (offline and Northwards users), mainly due to the Google authenticator. They cannot use two windows / browsers on their phone at the same time or their device is not compatible (operating system not up to date enough to use Google authenticator)
 - We are also looking into 'Magic links via SMS and email' which will send the user a link (valid for 10 mins). User selects the link, and they are taken into the intranet. Users do not need to remember a username or password, nor do they have to go through the Google authenticator. ICT Security Team have approved this process, so we need to test and see if this is a viable solution for users
- Telephone numbers including mobile numbers need updating or adding into user profiles. We are looking at an automated process as users simply won't update SAP. Mobile numbers link into the above point around 'Magic link SMS' and broadcasts below
- Broadcasts from the site – New groups being set up, such as Managers (has 1372 users). Internal Comms can use this group to target manager communications direct from the Intranet
- All news and updates are now being added to the site. The new engagement hub will be launched soon, which will support users to find news and events they require, all in one place
- Directorate communications – All areas set up and are being actively used and updated on a regular basis except Adults and Children's Directorates. We are waiting on the directorate leads to work with us

Internal Communications

Chief Executive (CEX) all staff communications – Reach over 6,000 staff

- Introducing new leader Councillor Bev Craig to the workforce
- Elections – Opportunities for staff to be part of it
- Peer Review – Regarded as **“first-class council”**, where the workforce is **“passionate about improving outcomes for Manchester’s people and rightly proud to work for Manchester City Council”**
- Omicron variant response – Joint announcement with Director of Public Health
- Introduction of Plan B measures and what that means for our workforce
- COVID-19 local updates and call out for vaccination volunteers
- Dedicated call-out to be a COVID-19 volunteer



Covid volunteers

Offline staff newsletter – Sent to homes of 815 members of staff

- InTouch designed to inform and update staff without access to online broadcasts – includes CEX message, priorities and opportunities

Manager communications – Reach over 1,200 managers

- Team Talk – Two broadcasts developed in partnership with the Health & Safety Team and HR to focus on COVID and workforce updates / actions



The Forum weekly all staff comms – Reach over 6,000 staff

- Main themes
 - Covid-19
 - Equality and diversity
 - Opportunities
 - Intranet 1-year birthday activities
 - HR updates – policies (staff travel and health and wellbeing / priorities including State of the City)

Future Shape of the Council / Our Ways of Working

- RBdXP core team roles advertised, Comms to support recruitment plus intranet content – 382 visits in the first 48 hours
- End User Device – ongoing promotion of digital transformation and onsite support of new technology (docking stations)



Campaigns

- End of year / Christmas
 - Special edition Staff Spotlight – 26% open rate and 18% click rate
 - Video message from Chief Executive – Video watched 262 times in the first month (most clicked link in the broadcast with 602 clicks)
 - Christmas Jumper Day – 21 staff responded to call to send in Christmas jumper / festive pictures
 - End of year showreel: Our 2021 journey – video watched 356 times in first month



The Chief Executive, Joanne Roney's end of year message and 'Our 2021 Journey'

Ashley Marks shares how he celebrated Hanukkah 2021

Hanukkah 2021 began on Sunday 28 November, and last week we reached out to find out how those celebrating Hanukkah would be marking the Festival of Lights this year. Ashley Marks, a Principal Lawyer in the Civil Recovery Section, got in touch to share how he, his wife Jeni and their son Shimon would be celebrating Hanukkah, and what this time of year means to him. [Email your celebration stories to us.](#)

[Read Ashley's story on the intranet.](#)



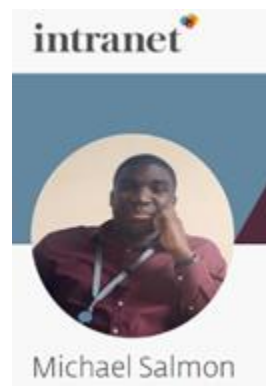
Awards for Excellence

- New design concept and campaign assets for multiple platforms. Nominations opened 15 December 2021
- 300 nominations received to date. The most engaged content on the intranet carousel



Race Review

- 'Let's talk about race' training programme. Chief Executive's script and filming booked for January 2022.
- Planned launch of recruitment pool app with HR (for the new year)
- Preparation for LeadHERship training programme ceremony (22 women signed up for women of colour 6-month programme)
- Talent Diversity intranet content designed to raise awareness and engagement.



**Talent & Diversity Lead,
Michael Salmon**

Looking ahead to January 2022

External Communications

- Covid Plan A and how we capture that in the 'Manchester Message', so that we do not lose momentum in vaccinations, testing and safety behaviours
- One million vaccines given in Manchester
- Omicron Business Support Schemes
- Our Year
- Budget 2022-23 Consultation
- BINFO sign ups
- State of the City Report
- Levenshulme and Burnage Active Travel Scheme closes 30 January 2022
- Ancoats and Beswick Cycle Scheme
- Electric Cargo Bikes coming to Manchester

Internal Communications

- Covid-19 Plan B and workforce updates / impacts
- Begin communications planning around Workforce Equality Strategy, Our Manchester 5th behaviour and Our Ways of Working
- Recruitment of Internal Communications Officer to go live and 2022 IC plan and priorities review
- Refresh corporate broadcasts, develop intranet engagement content and progress channel audit

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 8 February 2022

Subject: Future Shape of the Council – Digital, Estates, Ways of Working and ICT strategy

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer

Summary

This report has been written to provide an update on the Future Shape Programme including an update on Development of the ICT Strategy and the Estates Strategy (linked to how we work) and how they relate to the programme.

Future Shape of the Council is a two-year transformation programme designed to enable MCC to be in the best possible shape to deliver its ambitions as set out in the Our Manchester Strategy whilst meeting the external challenges the council face from budget pressures and the response and recovery to Covid 19.

The digital agenda, Estates and Ways of Working forms a major workstream within the Future Shape programme and ICT support will be integral to its successful delivery. This paper sets out this work.

Recommendations

That Scrutiny note the contents of this report and the changes that will be required over the next few years to deliver this important agenda.

Wards Affected: All

<p>Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city</p>
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<p>The Future Shape of the Council aims to improve the Council's efficiency and effectiveness in the context of reducing our carbon impact including in areas such as estates, printing, and travel. The successful delivery of the digital and ICT approach will be integral to this.</p>
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Our Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The Future Shape of the Council Programme is designed to strengthen the delivery of the priorities in Council's Corporate Plan, and as a result, all the Our Manchester Strategy outcomes. Some of the workstreams will also have a more direct impact as outlined below.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	<p>There are circa 27,000 residents in the City who are digitally excluded, with a significant correlation with social inclusion. As part of its response to Covid MCC has supported 800 residents with a combination of devices, data & skills support to help them get online. This work is being continued in the current financial year.</p> <p>The Joined-Up Health and Social Care workstream will support the successful implementation of integrated Health and Social Care improving health outcomes for residents.</p>
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The Place Based and New Approach for Housing workstreams will support improved services in neighbourhoods
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	The Council adopting technology and delivering digitally makes a positive contribution to Manchester's ambition to be a leading and inclusive Digital City.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

Future Shape of the Council and Arrangements for the Integration of Health and Social Care, Executive Report, March 2021

Provisional local government finance settlement 2022/23 and budget assumptions, Resources and Governance Scrutiny, January 2022

Future Shape of the Council – Digital and ICT workstream, Resources and Governance Scrutiny, June 2021

Driving Digital Inclusion and Bridging the Digital Divide in Manchester, Communities and Equalities Scrutiny, December 2020

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Future Shape of the Council is a two-year transformation programme designed to enable MCC to be in the best possible shape to deliver its ambitions at set out in the Our Manchester Strategy whilst meeting the external challenges the council face from budget pressures and the response and recovery to Covid 19.
- 1.2 This Report has been written to provide an update on the programme with a particular focus on the development of the ICT Strategy and the Estates Strategy and how they relate the programme.
- 1.3 This report includes:
 - The Future Council programme objectives and overview of workstreams.
 - An overview of the digitally integrated council workstream.
 - The role of ICT in the successful delivery of the programme, along with progress to date on the draft ICT Strategy and future target operating model for the service.
 - The role of Estates and ways of working in the successful delivery of the programme

2. Context

- 2.1 A report was brought to Resources and Governance Scrutiny in January on the Local Government finance settlement and implications for the Council's budget. The report sets out that around £7.8 million savings and mitigations, are required to deliver a balanced budget in the financial year 2022/23 but the position is more challenging over the three-year period with a budget gap of c£37m in 2023/24 rising to £57m the following year. Part of the work to address the budget position will be through the financial and operational benefits that the Future Shape programme can deliver.
- 2.2 The budget context is important for considering the next phase of the Future Shape of the Council programme. The wider changes that are also important for the Future Shape work include:
 - Further embedding the Northwards Housing organisation within the Council following the transfer into the Council in 2021, as part of the next Housing Strategy for the city
 - The next phase of Health and Social Care integration for Manchester, in the context of the establishment of a Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Integrated Care Partnership (ICP)
 - Planning for the replacement of the council's main Finance and Human Resources information system (SAP) which will be at end of life in 2027

3. Future Shape of the Council

3.1 The programme is being delivered through five key workstreams and one enabler:

- A digitally integrated Council: To embed a digital first approach across the council ensuring this is the best option to meet residents needs, ensure both staff and residents have the skills and can access online services and putting data and intelligence at the heart of decision making.
- A more purposeful and effective Core: with a collective vision and operating model, improved systems and processes (including the replacement of SAP) and enabled through a culture of high trust, accountability and inclusion.
- Building the future for MLCO: Further develop the effective support and partnership arrangements between MCC and the MLCO codified through the s.75 (MCC/MFT) and supporting frameworks, including data sharing and other back-office functions that are embedded within the MCC Core operating model. Coordinate effective delivery through our integrated place-based approaches, ensuring population health management and support to people to achieve better outcomes is central to the methodology.
- A new approach for housing: to further integrate Northwards housing delivery service into the Council including through back-office functions.
- Embedding place-based working across the council: ensure our workforce, processes and decision making fully embed and consider the role and needs of our diverse neighbourhoods with specific focus on financial planning, data and intelligence, Communications, and connecting with other programmes of work that have a place focus e.g., Children's Locality Plan.
- Organisational development, culture, and behaviours (enabling workstream): Supporting and enabling the organisational culture to meet the opportunities, challenges and expectations of the changes required.

3.2 Considerable progress has been made in each area. The Council has managed complex and difficult changes; bringing ALMO (Northwards Housing) back in house and agreeing the financial and support arrangements that underpin the Manchester Local Care Agreement, including a Section 75 agreement with Manchester Foundation Trust. The new customer model is in place and the procurement for the replacement of the CRM system is well advanced with extensive engagement on how the council will work with residents. The Core has delivered savings of £5.7m in 2021/22 and work is well advanced to review key processes and prepare for the replacement of SAP which needs to be in place by 2027 when the current system is no longer supported.

3.3 This report focuses on the inter-related issues of the digital workstream of Future Shape, the development of the Council's next ICT strategy and the associate target operating model, along with our future Estate and ways of working.

4.0 A Digitally Integrated Council Workstream

- 4.1 A previous report was brought to this committee in June 2021 outlining the work in this area. To recap, the Digital Workstream has five critical programmes to deliver. These are set out along with a short progress update below.

The successful implementation of the Resident and Business Digital Experience Programme (including the replacement of the existing customer relationship management system and introducing an integrated platform so that council front-facing systems interact to the benefit of our residents and businesses).

- 4.2 The Council is currently in the process of selecting a technology and implementation partner who will work with us to select, develop and implement the new digital technology platform as well as work to ensure the planned improvements for residents and businesses are delivered. The contract award for the technology partner is scheduled for March 2022. A further tender was issued to provide digital consultancy in order to provide guidance on the adoption of RBDXP and the formation of a digital team to support it on an ongoing basis. The team will be grown in phases and applications have been received for the first phase. It is anticipated that services will move over to the new technology platform from the summer of 2023.

- 4.3 A data protection impact assessment has been drawn up for the programme and the Council's equalities team have been engaged in the creation of an Equalities Impact Assessment for the programme.

Improvements to our data management and data integration, including a new data management policy.

- 4.4 The purpose of the Data Management theme is to provide a framework for how the council will manage, govern and develop information and data management practices to ensure statutory, regulatory and business needs are met, whilst maximising the potential of the data the council hold to inform decision making and service planning.

- 4.5 Work over the summer of 2021 including best practice reviews, discussions with experts and engagement sessions with staff, has resulted in a set of draft data management principles in which the Data Management Policy will be set. These are:

- Principle 1 Data Ownership: be clear on who owns the data
- Principle 2 Data Quality: the creation, maintenance and development of quality data needs clear processes to be defined
- Principle 3 Data Systems: all systems should be procured, implemented, and maintained to be compliant with agreed data standards
- Principle 4 Data Skills: all staff who create, use, maintain and extract data are trained so that they handle data appropriately

- Principle 5 Data Use: treating data as a council asset and using it in the most efficient and impactful way

4.6 Work is currently finalising the policy and principles, alongside a 2-year implementation roadmap. This will ensure that the basics are in place to enable the council to gain the maximum insight into the information held to inform decision making.

Supporting our residents and staff to develop improved digital skills and tackling digital exclusion.

4.7 The Council wants to support residents, businesses, and partners to interact with us by offering good quality, accessible technology that is easier than other methods, so that digital becomes the access channel of choice for most residents in their day to day dealing with the Council. Manchester's ambition is to enable people to be confident and independent online users. The Council's Digital Inclusion Team which within the Libraries Service, have for the past two years worked with partners to get more people online - providing a combination of devices, data and wrap around digital skills support to residents who could not get online. Given the importance of digital to the way we work, learn and live, the Council is continuing to deliver its ambition through the Digital Inclusion Action Plan.

4.8 The five overarching goals of the refreshed 2022 Digital Inclusion Action Plan are to:

- Increase the use of accessible data and research to create and measure digital inclusion initiatives.
- Support community organisations and key services to build capacity of digital inclusion delivery.
- Test and scale up more longer-term access to kit, data and skills support initiatives.
- Raise the profile of the role of Libraries in delivering digital inclusion and fixing the digital divide.
- Strengthen the city council's role in advocating and advancing digital inclusion through key services and programmes.

4.9 There will be further reports on digital inclusion which is also connected to the new Digital Strategy and Action Plan for the City. Although the purpose of this broader strategy is out of scope of Future Shape it is important to maintain a connection with this work. The Council's wider Digital Strategy includes the wider city infrastructure and how residents and businesses engage with digital services in the city.

4.10 ICT improvements for staff connectivity is outlined in section 5 below. This work is further enabled by the culture change programme which embraces these changes and transforming how we work both internally and with residents. The core principles of the programme are:

- Our sites will be hubs for collaboration, and our connection to the City and our communities will remain strong.
- All staff will spend a proportion of their time working on site to support team development and morale.
- Service delivery is the priority and all staff will have some form of flexibility to support their wellbeing and balance pressures outside of work.
- All staff will have the basic tools to do their job in any location.
- Managing, supporting and developing staff is key and will improve under these new arrangements.

4.11 As part of this work a programme to support staff digital literacy is being developed.

Streamline processes to improve delivery and ensure staff can focus their skills and attention on work which adds value both to them and the organisation.

4.12 A pilot to help automate the processing the Verification of Earnings and Pensions (VEPs) process has been agreed and a project team has been set up to progress the procurement and implementation of the new service. The ambition is to free up staff time so that they can concentrate on more meaningful tasks.

Implement a new intranet system that informs and engages staff in a new and exciting way whilst ensuring the council is compliant to The Web Accessibility Guidelines (known as WCAG2.1) for improving web accessibility and ensuring equal opportunities to access content.

4.13 This has been implemented and the new intranet is now in place. Work is ongoing to further develop functionality and engagement.

5.0 ICT & Digital Strategy and Future Operating Model

5.1 For this workstream to achieve its ambitions and to enable the transformation that the Council needs to undertake, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) will underpin most of the activity. ICT are currently developing an ICT & Digital Strategy with a supporting Future Operating Model with input from external expertise. This is to ensure that ICT continues to support the Council in the right way, as business need and technology evolves over time.

5.2 The main objectives are to:

- action the ambition to be a Digital-first and Cloud-first organisation
- align to the Council's wider Digital Strategy
- align to other MCC strategies, and policies and developing initiatives e.g., data management policy
- move IT provision from traditional transactional service to a more strategic and influencing focused service
- deliver secure, stable, and compliant operational services

- innovate and influence new ways of working through exploitation of modern technology
- establish a customer focused ICT & Digital organisation that offers great customer experience and seamless technology services.

5.3 The ICT service are currently delivering several major projects to improve resilience, replace old legacy systems and improve functionality and support the changes the council needs to make. These projects are outlined below.

WiFi

5.4 Increasing and improving Wi-Fi within our buildings will enable agile and flexible working. Current Wi-Fi provision varies considerably across Council sites with public Wi-Fi available in public-facing areas of some buildings, however there are currently fewer than ten sites that provide wireless connectivity for staff using Council devices. This is being overhauled as part of a wider refresh of our ICT network to provide a Wi-Fi service in all Council buildings, which will support staff, public, partner, and guest access. To support neighbourhood working, an interim solution in District Offices has been installed until the longer-term solution is rolled out, work is ongoing with frontline services to prioritise sites for the rollout.

Network to our Buildings

5.5 Upgrading the wide area network (WAN) connections into our sites will enable colleagues and users in our buildings faster and more reliable access to resources, with sites increasing bandwidth by at least a factor of ten. These upgraded networks provide a platform for collaborative technologies such as meeting room audio visual to operate efficiently within. The project is due to complete in April 2022 with over 100 upgrades completed to date.

End User Device

5.6 The End User Device (EUD) project started in 2020 and will continue in 2022 to replace all non-compliant, outdated, low specification devices and move to a single future proofed, role appropriate, fit for purpose device. This will standardise the offer to councillors and workforce (except where specialist equipment is required) and both rationalise the number of devices and ensure they are appropriate to the different roles within the Council. The new technology will ensure our key workers have the correct device to deliver an excellent service to our residents whilst also providing a platform to drive future improvements and efficiencies.

5.7 This new technology will be based around the principles of simplicity of use and accessibility, moving users to a single device that will work wherever it is best for their role, giving secure access to council systems, telephony and to collaborate with colleagues. This will reduce our estate to a single device per employee in most cases, based on their role. This will also enable the council to fully utilise the new technologies now in place, such as Office 365

and 8x8 (Telephony). The new energy efficient technology will also contribute to the Council's carbon neutral commitments.

- 5.8 Over the last 12 months the project has faced some significant challenges including the global supply chain shortage of components, price rises and Covid restrictions which impacted the initial roll out of equipment. Despite these challenges, the project has successfully issued over 2,600 new laptops, bags, and locks to key services across the council. Phase 2 of the EUD device roll out will commence from February 2022 and will issue over 1400 new laptops to front line social workers via local collection hubs. The project will also replace monitors across 222 locations which are end of life, will remove Wyse terminals (3800) which have been outside of the manufacturer's warranty since 2018 and any outdated desktop PCs that do not support our technology solutions such as softphone telephony (8x8) or MS teams calls /video capability. The project has now successfully recycled over 1,500 of the Wyse terminals and work will continue to ensure all remaining terminals are removed before April 2022.

Meeting Room Technology

- 5.9 Improved meeting room and collaboration spaces will support different needs such as hybrid meetings and collaboration with other organisations. A pilot is being developed which will test different types of meeting room equipment in different locations across the MCC estate. The pilot should be in place by the end of March 2022. The learning from this pilot, feedback from users and external expertise will then result in the development of a business case and a choice of technology for the meeting rooms. Any technology implemented in the meeting rooms will be simple to use, secure and accessible. It is anticipated that delivery of this project will start in Summer 2022 and take approximately eighteen months to complete.

Infrastructure and Applications

- 5.10 A review of all infrastructure and applications has enabled the council to move towards more standardised applications, this allows the council to ensure work is done following best practice and improves the overall quality of service delivery. The Council's ICT environment has seen significant change as a result of new ways of working and continued adoption of cloud-based systems. Looking to the future it is now time to review and prepare this environment to meet new demand and future ways of working. The Infrastructure project has analysed the Council's ICT environment and produced a comprehensive catalogue of applications and technology services. The information contained within the catalogue is now supporting a detailed investigation into more efficient and flexible ways to deliver infrastructure services that is looking to take advantage of cloud-based hosting alongside more traditional physical hosted models. This work will provide strategic direction for infrastructure hosting and will be closely aligned to the ICT Strategy and Future Operating Model (FOM) work.

- 5.11 The Council has made significant progress since the last update in removing old systems, improved security patching of current ones and decommissioning old hardware. The old social care case management system and associated system have been decommissioned with the move to Liquid Logic and EYEs, along with a number of historical systems that are no longer required. Plans are underway for the next phase including:
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) with the RBDXP Programme as outlined earlier in the report.
 - Replacing the SAP system that currently provides the Council's HR, Finance and Payroll Systems by 2027 when the current system is no longer supported.
 - System Integration engine that allows systems to 'connect' to each other and pass data securely to where it is needed.
- 5.12 These new systems will adopt the latest technologies which will see much more workflow of transactions, user self-service, and assisted decision making that will enable a significant number of manual transactions or processes where there is simple processing of requests, to be automated. The full impact of this is currently unknown and will be addressed in individual business cases but time-consuming actions such as copying, filing, cutting and pasting into other systems will stop being the norm. There is a subgroup currently investigating this and exploring the different technologies available in more detail.
- 5.13 The council will move to more modern technology platforms with cloud hosting being the norm. This will give us greater scalability, resilience, and flexibility in how our systems are securely accessed and updated. Investing ICT expenditure in organisations with strong sustainability credentials that focus on energy efficiency will support carbon neutrality for the city, as well as supporting remote access across different devices. This will see the ICT service move to being much more agile in its delivery, adopting low code solutions that needs less programming and which are much more about the mapping of business workflows into the IT solutions.
- 5.14 In conclusion, ICT are working intrinsically with the business to support corporate objectives and as such the new strategy will reflect the ambitions now and in the future as the organisation evolves. It is envisaged that the first draft of the ICT & Digital Strategy will be available in the new financial year for approval, with the key supporting technology initiatives being implemented as set out in this paper. Line of business applications will continue to be replaced with more modern technology platforms as underpinning contracts expire and before the technologies go out of support.

6.0 Estates and Ways of Working

- 6.1 The current and future requirements of the workforce and the ICT workstream shape the estate strategy, both in terms of the overall estate requirements and different requirements for offices across the estate. Some practical examples

of how Estates supports the delivery of the Future Shape Programme are set out below.

- 6.2 In the Town Hall Extension, the Customer Service Centre has been redesigned onto a smaller footprint in line with the new service model. Officers are developing proposals for the surplus space, including provision of larger meeting and collaboration spaces.
- 6.3 To support the further integration of Northwards Housing into the Council the Estates and Facilities Service has driven the rationalisation of the Northwards office estate, relocating Northwards teams out of rented accommodation in Hexagon Tower, consolidating into the existing Northwards neighbourhood offices and the Town Hall Extension. The surrender of Hexagon Tower was completed in November 2021 and has saved the organisation c£377k in annual rent and running costs.
- 6.4 In February 2021, Education Services were relocated into the Town Hall Extension. This was made possible by adopting a smaller office layout, based on the Our Ways of Working approach. This relocation allowed the disposal of rented accommodation at Universal Square, saving c£210k a year in rent and running costs.
- 6.5 Moving staff out of rented accommodation at Bridgewater House and Peter House is currently underway, avoiding extra costs to the Our Town Hall Decant budget.
- 6.6 The further integration of Health and Social Care is supported through the development of the Gorton Hub, where construction activity is onsite and due for completion in October. The relocation of the Manchester Local Care Organisation corporate functions into the Town Hall Extension is due in February and support to Manchester Health and Care Commissioning to redesign and transform their Parkway offices to support new ways of working, was completed in September 2021.
- 6.7 The other key work area impacting on the estate is how the estate is configured to support the changing needs of our workforce. The Estates and Facilities Service have adopted the following principles for the office estate:
 - Cost and carbon efficiency: The council will reconsider our use of expensive and inefficient buildings and make capital investment in the buildings we retain.
 - Supporting localities: Physical offices remain the cornerstone of our estate strategy, rooting teams in the localities they serve, creating a visible presence across Manchester's communities. The council will maintain a strong office presence both in the City Centre and across our neighbourhoods.
 - Supporting teams and partnerships: Enable people to come together – supporting collaboration and connection through co-location.

- Supporting individuals: The council will provide a variety of workspaces for staff – space to work alongside their team, space to focus, space to work locally, space to meet and connect with others.
 - Connecting staff to neighbourhoods: The council will provide accessible workspace across the estate so staff can work in a place convenient to them and aligned to the needs of their service, regardless of their main office base. This could be in our offices or other neighbourhood buildings such as libraries.
- 6.8 Across the estate, the council are testing different office layouts that underpin more agile and flexible working styles. Features include different furniture solutions, such as:
- Workbenches, that provide flexible space to work or meet. By removing partitions they provide a more flexible area where occupation can scale up and down to the needs of the team, and are more spatially efficient.
 - ‘Hexpods’, that are screened to provide quieter space to focus, or to participate in online meetings without disturbing others.
 - Acoustically screened sofas, that provide more informal meeting spaces for small groups, with screening for privacy.
- 6.9 These furniture solutions complement the new ICT equipment described above, and are supported by the improved ICT infrastructure, such as Wi-Fi and network upgrades. Examples of areas where new office layouts are being tested include the Town Hall Extension, Longsight District Office and Etrop Court in Wythenshawe. Early feedback from staff is that the new furniture and ICT improvements are very popular.
- 6.10 In the Town Hall Extension, a flexible ‘business lounge’ area has been created, available to all building users, to provide extra meeting, working and collaboration space. As these new office layouts are more efficient, this work has created space that will allow teams to move out of rented accommodation at Bridgewater House and into the Town Hall Extension. These moves will take place in February.
- 6.11 Feedback from teams using the new office layouts is being collected, and as the restrictions of Covid are relaxed there will be further opportunities for learning and to adapt the approach.
- 6.12 Working alongside the Directorates, officers are updating the estates strategy, which sets out the current and future requirements for our operational estate, taking into account reopening of the Town Hall in 2024.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 That Scrutiny note the contents of this report and the changes that will be required over the next few years to deliver this important agenda.

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**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 8 February 2022

Subject: Overview Report

Report of: Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit

Summary

This report provides the following information:

- Recommendations Monitor
- Key Decisions
- Work Programme
- Items for information

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to discuss and note the information provided and agree the work programme.

Wards Affected: All

Contact Officer:

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

None

1. Monitoring Previous Recommendations

This section of the report contains recommendations made by the Committee and responses to them indicating whether the recommendation will be implemented, and if it will be, how this will be done.

Items highlighted in grey have been actioned and will be removed from future reports.

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
7 Dec 2021	RGSC/21/57 Council Housing Stock - Governance Arrangements	<p>Requests Officers and the appropriate Executive Member(s) re-consider the proposed makeup of the Board in light of the comments and concerns raised and in doing so recommends that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the PFI stock is explicitly removed from the Terms of Reference; the maximum term of office for both Elected Members and the co-opted residents from the Council's housing stock should be set at a maximum of six years, that there should be parity between Members and residents, and that consideration be given to staggering the lengths of membership of the Board so that there is progressive rolling change in personnel over time; the terms of reference cover how conflicts of interest for Elected Members are to be addressed; the terms of reference explicitly refer to gender balance and ensuring diversity and protected characteristics are proportionately reflected across the membership of the Board; the terms of reference identify which Scrutiny 	To be reported back to a future meeting	David Ashmore Cllr Akbar

		<p>Committee(s) will be responsible for scrutinising the work of the Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the terms of reference refer to the conurbation of Northwards Housing Stock rather than North Manchester, in order to truly reflect the location of all Northwards residents; • the terms of reference are explicit insofar as the Board will act as an advisory body and not a governance and decision-making body; and • consideration be given to a minimum number of co-opted non-resident members to be appointed, and a strategy is drawn up for timely recruitment of suitably qualified independent members. 		
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2. Key Decisions

The Council is required to publish details of key decisions that will be taken at least 28 days before the decision is due to be taken. Details of key decisions that are due to be taken are published on a monthly basis in the Register of Key Decisions.

A key decision, as defined in the Council's Constitution is an executive decision, which is likely:

- To result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates, or
- To be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the city.

The Council Constitution defines 'significant' as being expenditure or savings (including the loss of income or capital receipts) in excess of £500k, providing that is not more than 10% of the gross operating expenditure for any budget heading in the in the Council's Revenue Budget Book, and subject to other defined exceptions.

An extract of the most recent Register of Key Decisions, published on **31 January 2021**, containing details of the decisions under the Committee's remit is included below. This is to keep members informed of what decisions are being taken and, where appropriate, include in the work programme of the Committee.

Corporate Core					
National Taekwondo Centre 2018/10/19A Enter into a 39 year lease with Sport Taekwondo UK Ltd for areas within the building.	Chief Executive	Not before 1st Nov 2018		Briefing Note and Heads of Terms	Richard Cohen r.cohen@manchester.gov.uk

Strategic land and buildings acquisition 2019/06/03B The approval of capital expenditure for the purpose of the strategic acquisition of land and buildings to support the Eastlands Regeneration Framework.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 3rd Jul 2019		Checkpoint 4 Business Case & Briefing Note	Richard Cohen r.cohen@manchester.gov.uk
Strategic land and buildings acquisition 2019/06/03C The approval of capital expenditure for the purpose of the strategic acquisition of land and buildings to support the Eastlands Regeneration Framework	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 1st Mar 2020		Checkpoint 4 Business Case & Briefing Note	Richard Cohen r.cohen@manchester.gov.uk
Establishment of a multi-supplier framework for the supply of gas TC473 (2020/01/28A) To approve a tender to establish a Multi-supplier framework for the supply of Gas. The framework	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 1st Oct 2021		Report and Recommendation	Walter Dooley w.dooley@manchester.gov.uk

agreement will also be made available on the same basis to other AGMA local authorities and any North West based public sector funded organisation.					
Manchester City Centre Triangle (2021/01/14A) The approval of capital expenditure for the construction of a scheme to connect travel hubs in the city centre	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 1st Mar 2021		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	Steve Robinson, Director of Operations (Highways) steve.robinson@manchester.gov.uk
Provision of Postal Services TC514 (2021/03/10A) To seek approval to appoint a supplier/s to provide Postal Services to Manchester City Council.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 8th Apr 2021		Confidential Contract Report with Recommendation.	Anna Caswell-Thorp Anna.caswell-thorp@manchester.gov.uk
(TC145) Framework for the Provision of Financial Services (2021/05/11A) The appointment of provider(s) to deliver	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 11th Jun 2021			Louise Causley louise.causley@manchester.gov.uk

Financial Services Advice and Support.					
Early Years - Tendered Daycare Settings (2021/07/16B) The approval of capital expenditure to support the continued provision of high-quality Early Years settings across the City.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 16th Aug 2021		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	Amanda Corcoran, Director of Education a.corcoran@manchester.gov.uk
Security Services Contract (2021/10/15B) To award a five-year contract for Security Services. Security Services include access control, visitor management and CCTV.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 15th Nov 2021		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	Andrew Blore a.blore@manchester.gov.uk
Security Services Upgrade Project - Capital Expenditure (2021/11/10A) To approve capital expenditure to procure and implement the Security Services Upgrade Project.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 9th Dec 2021		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	Andrew Blore a.blore@manchester.gov.uk

Contract for the Provision of Microsoft Licences and Support (2021/11/26C) The appointment of a Company for the provision of Microsoft licences across the Council estate, including relevant support and maintenance.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 26th Dec 2021		Report & Recommendation	Mary Lynch, Head of ICT PMO mary.lynch@manchester.gov.uk
Contract for a Technology and Implementation Partner for the Council's Resident and Business Digital Experience Programme (RBDxP) (2021/11/29B) The appointment of Technology and Implementation Partner for the Council's Resident and Business Digital Experience Programme (RBDxP)	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 29th Dec 2021		Report & Recommendation	
Contract for the Provision of Consultancy Services for Resident and Business Digital Experience Programme (RBDxP) (30/11/2021A)	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 30th Dec 2021		Report & Recommendation	

The appointment of Consultancy Services for Resident and Business Digital Experience Programme (RBDxP)					
Flare case management system (2021/12/03A) Approval to go out to Tender to replace an existing case management system.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 3rd Jan 2022		Business Case	
Council Tax 2021/22 Balance (2021/12/8A) To agree the estimated council tax surplus or deficit	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 28th Jan 2022	In consultation with the Executive Leader	Council Tax Balance report	Julie Hardman julie.hardman@manchester.gov.uk
Business Rates 2021/22 Balance (2021/12/8B) To agree the estimated business rates surplus or deficit	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 28th Feb 2022	In consultation with the Executive Leader	Business Rates balance report	Julie Hardman julie.hardman@manchester.gov.uk
Council Tax Base 2022/23 (2021/12/31A) To set the 2022/23 Council Tax Base	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 31st Jan 2022	In consultation with the Executive Leader	Council Tax Base report	Julie Hardman julie.hardman@manchester.gov.uk
Business Rates Base	City Treasurer	Not before	In consultation	Business Rates	Julie Hardman

2022/23 (2021/12/31B) To set the 2022/23 Business Rates Base	(Deputy Chief Executive)	28th Jan 2022	with the Executive Leader	base report	julie.hardman@manchester.gov.uk
Development and Growth					
Sprinkler Systems Installation - Tower Blocks PFIs (22/01/12A) Approval of capital expenditure to install sprinkler systems to 11 high rise council owned tower blocks.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 12th Feb 2022		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	
Highways					
Hire of Highways Maintenance Plant Vehicles and Equipment TC1010 (2019/09/03B) To seek approval to award a Framework to multiple suppliers who can deliver Highways Maintenance Plant Vehicles and equipment.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 1st Nov 2019		Confidential contract report with recommendation	Brendan Taylor b.taylor1@manchester.gov.uk

Provision of Rock Salt (2020/08/14G) To seek approval to award a contract to a supplier for the provision of De-Icing Salt (Rock Salt).	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 12th Sep 2020			Steve Robinson, Director of Operations (Highways) steve.robinson@manchester.gov.uk
Harpurhey & Moston - Junction and Crossings (Phase 1A) MCF (2021/06/10B) The approval of expenditure for the construction of a number of new crossings or upgrade existing crossings to support walking and cycling by making the roads safer in the Harpurhey & Moston using the Mayors Challenge Fund (MCF)	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 10th Jul 2021		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	Steve Robinson, Director of Operations (Highways) steve.robinson@manchester.gov.uk
Improvements to Manchester Cycleway that combines the Fallowfield loop line and Yellow Brick Road (previously the Stockport Branch Canal) (2021/09/17B)	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 11th Oct 2021		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	Steve Robinson, Director of Operations (Highways) steve.robinson@manchester.gov.uk

The approval of capital expenditure for the construction cost estimate for Manchester Cycleway funded by Mayors Challenge Fund					
40 MPH Speed Limit Reduction Programme (2021/11/22A) To approve capital expenditure to implement new reduced speed limits from 40mph to 30mph at ten locations across the city, these include: Moseley Road, Mancunian Way, Wilbraham Road, Dawson Street, Egerton Street, Regent Road, Kingsway, Styal Road, World Way and Broadway A663.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 22nd Dec 2021		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	Steve Robinson, Director of Operations (Highways) steve.robinson@manchester.gov.uk
Levenshulme and Burnage Active Neighbourhood (2021/12/16A)	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 16th Jan 2022		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	Steve Robinson, Director of Operations (Highways) steve.robinson@manchester.gov.uk

Approval of capital expenditure to undertake construction works for Levenshulme and Burnage Active Neighbourhood					
Public Realm Improvements 2021/22 (22/01/22B) To approve the capital expenditure for a number of essential Public Realm improvements at sites including Lincoln Monument, Rhodes Memorial Clock, Jubilee Fountain, Exchange Square & Rutherford Pocket Park Withington.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 12th Feb 2022		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	Steve Robinson, Director of Operations (Highways) steve.robinson@manchester.gov.uk
Children and Families					
Extra Care - Russell Road LGBT Project 2019/03/01H The approval of capital expenditure on the City's Extra Care Programme to develop new build extra care units which will be in the ownership of MCC.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 1st Mar 2019		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	Steve Sheen s.sheen@manchester.gov.uk

Extra Care - Millwright Street Project 2018/03/01I The approval of capital expenditure on the City's Extra Care Programme to develop new build extra care units which will be in the ownership of MCC.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 1st Mar 2019		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	Steve Sheen s.sheen@manchester.gov.uk
Manchester Creative Media Arts Academy Completion Works (2021/10/11A) The approval of capital expenditure for completion of works outstanding at Manchester Creative Media Arts Academy.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 11th Nov 2021		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	Amanda Corcoran, Director of Education a.corcoran@manchester.gov.uk
Liquid Logic Phase 2 (2021/11/29D) To support the further embedding of system functionality and improved data quality and reporting and agree to fund the staff costs associated with this work and the costs for a	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 27th Dec 2021		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	Andrew Blore a.blore@manchester.gov.uk

external consulting organization to help with the work.					
Education and Skills					
Q20347 Consultant for EYES data Migration. 2019/04/25A Contract is to support Manchester City Council with the migration of their Education Management System away from Capita One towards the Liquidlogic EYES solution.	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 1st Jun 2019		Report and Recommendation	John Nickson j.nickson@manchester.gov.uk

3. Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee - Work Programme – February 2022

Tuesday, 8 February 2022, 2.00pm (Report deadline Friday 28 January 2021)

Item	Purpose	Executive Member	Strategic Director/Lead Officer	Comments
2022/23 Budget Report	Consideration of the final 2022/23 budget proposals in relation to the Corporate Core Directorate that will go onto February Budget Executive and Scrutiny and March Council.	Councillor Craig (Leader)	Carol Culley Tom Wilkinson	
Council Communications update	<p>To receive a report that provides an update on the Council's new three year communications strategy (April 2022 onwards).</p> <p>To also include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities for 2002/23; • the Council's Social Media strategy; and • Examples of changes to take account of evaluation against outcomes 	Councillor Craig (Leader)	Alun Ireland	
Future Shape Programme - Update	<p>To receive an update on Future Shape Programme including an update on the following and how they relate the programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of ICT Strategy • Estates Strategy - linked to how we work 	Cllr Rahman (Deputy Leader)	Carol Culley Chris Wanley Richard Munns	

Overview Report	The monthly report includes the recommendations monitor, relevant key decisions, the Committee's work programme and any items for information.	N/A	Scrutiny Support	
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Items to be Scheduled

(Items highlighted in grey indicate that these have been included in the work plan of one of the above meetings).

(New items added are highlighted in blue)

Item	Purpose	Executive Member	Strategic Director / Lead Officer	Comments
Commercial activity	Precise Details to be confirmed	Councillor Craig	Carol Culley	
Contract Monitoring	Precise Details to be confirmed	Councillor Craig	Carol Culley	
Future Strategy for City Centre Car Parks	To receive a report on the strategy for the return of NCP city centre car parks to the Council's control	Councillor Rawlins	Carol Culley Steve Robinson	
Review of investments being made by the Council into its Capital Strategy in terms of delivering future VFM post COVID19	Precise scope to be determined	Councillor Craig	TBC	
GMCA Governance and Public Sector Reform	To receive an update on what is being delivered for the City through these arrangements	Councillor Craig	TBC	Date to be confirmed

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