

Economy Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 12 January 2023

Present:

Councillor Johns (Chair) – in the Chair
Councillors Good, Noor, Raikes, I Robinson, Shilton Godwin and Taylor

Also present: Councillors: Hacking and Rawlins

Apologies: Councillor Bell and Moran

ESC/23/1 Minutes

Decision:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 8 December 2022 be approved as a correct record.

ESC/23/2 Employment and Training Opportunities from Major Capital Programmes

The committee considered a report of the Director of Inclusive Economy which provided an update on the employment and skills opportunities created from Manchester City Council's major capital investment programmes, with a key focus on the Our Town Hall and The Factory projects.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- The importance of social value and the need to embed it within the Council's capital investment programmes;
- The integration of social value into the Our Town Hall Project through contractual mechanisms with construction and design team employers from the outset of the project;
- The monitoring of social value against 20 specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), based around employment, skills, training, and local community benefit with a monetary value attached to each KPI that measures social return on investment (SROI);
- The social and economic value achievements of the Our Town Hall project and progress against KPIs, including individual case studies;
- The social and economic value achievements of The Factory project and progress against KPIs, including individual case studies;
- Noting that the Factory's Social Value KPIs were realigned in June 2021 to create new jobs, new apprenticeships and Kickstart placements for Manchester residents first;
- The procurement framework used by several Greater Manchester local authorities and the North West Construction Hub (NWCH) focused on Manchester projects;

- Tenders for a large Manchester City Council capital funded project must answer a social value question with weighting of 30%. This includes a link to Manchester City Council's Social Value Toolkit and tenders are asked to demonstrate how their social value proposal would be both Manchester specific and project specific and targeted at hard-to-reach groups within local wards.

In introducing the item, the Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure highlighted the importance of social value and explained that the Council had a strong reputation for delivering social value. He stated that social value was an important lever in the delivery of jobs, training and work experience and the Council was committed to providing these opportunities for residents.

The Director of Inclusive Economy explained that size, scale, building type and procurement impacted the delivery of social value between different projects. She highlighted how the Our Town Hall project was a once-in-a-multigenerational opportunity and social value was embedded as a core objective of this development from the outset. The scheme included ambitious social value objectives with built-in financial incentives for contractors to meet social value KPIs, and financial penalties for under-performance. She explained that a different approach was taken with The Factory scheme to work collaboratively with Laing O'Rourke and Manchester International Festival to deliver social value outcomes across the construction and creative and digital elements of the project

Two apprentices – Abdul Tahir from Mace and Rhianna Austin from Laing O'Rourke – also attended the meeting to share their experiences of apprenticeships.

Key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussions included:

- Whether the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relating to new apprentices were targeted to Manchester residents;
- Why the number of new apprentices up to level 3 was under target;
- What attracted the guests in attendance to their apprenticeships; and
- How the Council communicated the importance of social value to other major employers in the city.

In response to a member's query regarding whether the target number of apprentices were to be Manchester residents, the Work and Skills Specialist explained that the overall target for number of apprentices working on the Our Town Hall project was 150, with 100 of these at level 2 and 50 at level 4 and above. For The Factory project, the target was 25 new apprentices for the construction element. He confirmed that the apprenticeship scheme for the Our Town Hall project was solely for those living or studying in Manchester whilst The Factory scheme had a 'Manchester first' approach due to the way it was procured through the North West Construction Hub.

The Director of Inclusive Economy highlighted how the KPI for the number of new apprentices at level 4 and above was overachieving. She also stated that the Our Town Hall project remained underway, and this meant that delivery on the number of apprentices below level 4 would continue. It was recognised that there had been a

national and local decline in apprenticeships, partly due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and work needed to be done to improve take-up. The Work and Skills Specialist also explained that the final phases of both the Our Town Hall and The Factory projects were difficult to derive social value from due to rising costs and them being less appealing to those searching for an apprenticeship. Assurances were provided that the Council's Social Value Manager working on the Our Town Hall project had sight of contracts for individual packages with LendLease and this provided the Council with influence and the ability to support social value within projects.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding what attracted the apprentices to their roles, Abdul advised that a college teacher suggested the idea of an apprenticeship and he researched the idea through the Council's website, attended National Apprenticeship Week hosted by GMCA and visited the project. He reiterated previous sentiments that the Our Town Hall project was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Rhianna explained that she wanted a career switch to the built environment sector, and she received an email advert from the Kickstart scheme. She had previously undertaken work experience with Manchester International Festival, which provided a link with The Factory project.

The Director of Inclusive Economy informed the committee that the Council continued to encourage other major employers in Manchester to embed social value into their work. An example of this was the Social Value Framework and Charter which had been devised and implemented for partners in North Manchester. This included a shared set of social value objectives to deliver across all North Manchester projects in the next 15 years. This was the first time a place-based approach had been taken and opportunities to do this in other areas of the city was anticipated. Other examples of how social value is encouraged among other major employers included work on the Real Living Wage and a well-established programme between universities and The Growth Company to provide opportunities for residents in the construction sector. An annual conference was also held to showcase social value achievements across the city.

The committee thanked the apprentices for their attendance and sharing their experiences and wished them luck in their careers.

Decision:

That the report be noted.

ESC/23/3 Update on Public Engagement for Manchester Active Travel Strategy and Investment Plan

The committee considered a report of the Strategic Director (Growth and Development) which provided an update on the public engagement activity carried out to inform the production of the Manchester Active Travel Strategy and Investment Plan (MATSIP).

Key points and themes within the report included:

- The MATSIP aims to create a city-wide, Manchester-specific strategy and network plan for active travel investment and a prioritised pipeline of measures to deliver across the city;
- Public and stakeholder engagement was carried out between July and December 2022, including online consultation, public engagement workshops and email responses;
- Key themes arising from the public consultation, including safety; maintenance of existing infrastructure; new infrastructure; and non-infrastructure measures;
- A draft network map; and
- Next steps for the development of the MATSIP.

Key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussions included:

- Welcoming progress on the Strategy and noting its importance;
- Whether the Strategy could be more specific about what inequalities it aimed to reduce, and how this would be achieved;
- The need for an active travel network to be well-linked with schools and other infrastructure;
- The impact of speeding and pavement parking as barriers to active travel;
- The need for an active travel network to be integrated with public transport;
- Bus regulation was needed to encourage walking and reduce car usage;
- The impact of building works on reducing capacity for active travel by obstructing pavements;
- How the Council worked with developers to incorporate active travel provisions into major schemes;
- The need to repair gullies to improve road safety and encourage walking;
- Whether previous consultations on active travel were incorporated into the development of the MATSIP;
- A need for places to permanently store bicycles, particularly for residents in apartments; and
- Noting a distinct focus on cycling in the MATSIP and expressing hopes for there to be a balance between different active travel modes in the final Strategy.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport introduced the item and explained that the Council had taken a different approach to consulting on the draft MATSIP by holding face-to-face engagement sessions as opposed to relying on online forms of consultation. She expressed her thanks to the members, residents and community groups who responded to the consultation and stated that this helped to inform a coherent and robust Strategy that would help to take advantage of all funding opportunities.

The Principal Policy Officer explained that the consultation was undertaken in partnership with Sweco over a 6-week period in autumn 2022. He stated that the consultation responses had provided useful key themes to highlight in the final Strategy, which would be considered in February by the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee and, if endorsed, the Executive.

In response to a member's question around inequalities, the Executive Member for Environment and Transport highlighted that the Strategy aimed to make all active travel modes accessible to everyone, which would help to alleviate financial and health inequalities. The Principal Policy Officer advised that the Strategy would be based around five objectives, including reducing citywide inequalities, and further detail on this would be included in the final report considered by the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee in February. He also highlighted the prioritisation tool for the Strategy which would utilise qualitative and quantitative data on multiple deprivation, health data, population and employment densities to assess where investment would be best targeted to reduce these inequalities.

A need for the active travel network to be well-linked with schools was acknowledged and members were advised that Manchester was taking part in the Greater Manchester School Streets Pilot, which placed restrictions on motor traffic at drop off and pick up times at 7 schools in the city. This would encourage people to make the school run and other everyday journeys by bike or on foot and would enable children to breathe cleaner air on the school run. The Strategy would also reference the Council's aspirations to expand the School Streets programme and it was hoped that national legislation may be enacted to enable the Council to enforce further restrictions on motor traffic around schools. The Principal Policy Officer suggested other ways of addressing parking issues around schools, such as traffic restraint measures and filtered neighbourhoods.

In response to issues raised by the committee regarding pavement parking and accessibility and speeding, the Executive Member for Environment and Transport advised that the Council's Highways Access Group which works with officers at the design stage on any new development to ensure that these issues are considered earlier in the development process.

The Strategic Director (Growth and Development) noted a need to look at active travel in an integrated way and explained that the Strategy sat alongside a number of other strategies related to mobility but was being developed with consideration given to the city's growth ambitions and key growth locations.

It was noted that movement strategies, public transport amenities and active travel provisions were key in the planning of major developments, such as the Co-op Live Arena. The Strategic Director (Growth and Development) confirmed that this would be undertaken through the planning process but negotiations and discussions with developers would also be held.

It was also confirmed that the Council worked with developers to minimise disruption from building works through sequencing and aligning programmes where possible.

In response to the Chair's query as to whether previous consultations on active travel were incorporated into the development of the MATSIP, the Principal Policy Officer advised that the technical work undertaken by Sweco included responses from previous consultations and that this would be clarified in the final report.

In summarising the item, the Chair proposed recommending that the Committee's comments be included in the full MATSIP report going to Environment and Climate

Change Scrutiny Committee and the Executive in February, which was supported by the Committee. He also informed members that the Committee was invited to attend the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee meeting when the final report would be considered.

Decision:

That the committee

1. notes the report;
2. notes that the full MATSIP document and a summary report will be brought to the February 2023 Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee and, if agreed, Executive for adoption; and
3. recommends that the full MATSIP document reflects the Committee's comments and includes definitions as to what is meant by "inequalities of access" as stated at section 3.4(d) of the report.

ESC/23/4 Revised Policy for Residents Parking Schemes

The committee considered a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which outlined a revised policy around the implementation and operation of Residents Parking Zones (RPZ) within the city.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Resident parking schemes are implemented to tackle the impact of commuter and other non-residential parking on residential areas;
- The revised policy reflects the feedback and issues that have been gathered during the process of extending the Christie Resident Parking Scheme and in the design of other planned schemes;
- Existing policy challenges identified by the review of the current scheme;
- Proposed changes to the scheme, including provisions for digital visitor permits, introduction of transferable paper permits for those without digital access and physical temporary parking permits to all residents;
- There are currently no plans to change the design of existing schemes that are already in operation;
- The removal of the visitor permit charge and provision of scratch cards to each household within the current schemes is estimated to cost £75k per annum;
- Positive feedback had been received on the proposed changes through drop-in sessions with residents within the extended Christie RPS.

Key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussions included:

- The success of resident parking schemes in reducing parking problems;
- How the proposed changes to permits would help digitally excluded residents;
- How secure the online system was, and whether any Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) issued during technical faults with the system would be rescinded;
- Provisions for parking permits for carers;

- Whether the estimated £75k cost of the proposed changes was funded from revenue;
- How often enforcement and levels of non-compliance would be reviewed and what the process would be if additional enforcement resources were required;
- The Council's legal right to enforce parking policy on unadopted roads;
- How many scratchcard permits each household would be permitted;
- The Executive's approach to the issues which make Resident Parking Zones necessary, and what can be done to reduce the need for these; and
- What more could be done to deal with dangerous parking, such as near junctions.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport and the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) introduced the item and explained that the revised policy reflected feedback from the extended Christie resident parking scheme and other emerging schemes to ensure that the policy was fit for purpose.

The Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) explained that the revised policy was to be agreed by the Executive, after which work would begin to identify how the scheme would operate in practice. Some detailed thinking around this had already been undertaken but the main design work would begin once the policy was agreed, with implementation scheduled for the next financial year.

Ensuring that digitally excluded residents could access parking permits would be addressed during the practical design phase of the policy.

The Parking Services Manager provided assurances that in the event of a resident or visitor with a permit within a resident parking scheme area receiving a PCN, this would be rescinded. She emphasised that resident parking schemes were in place for the benefit of residents and that the Council did not seek to penalise residents. This would remain the approach in the event of a system failure or technical issues.

She also assured members that the new online permits portal was fit for purpose, quick to use and user-friendly.

Confirmation was given that parking permits for carers would be provided in addition to the proposed two permits per household.

In response to queries regarding scratchcard permits, members were advised that these would allow for 10 visits per scratchcard. Discussions were ongoing as to how many free scratchcards would be provided to each household, although it was suggested that this may be one per year. It was stated, however, that this may differ between schemes depending on their location in the city.

The Parking Services Manager also explained with regards to parking enforcement that the Council had recently entered into a new contract beginning in April 2023 which included a 20% increase in the number of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO) for out-of-town areas. This would help to alleviate issues in some areas where resources had previously been stretched. Members were also informed that there would be a further uplift in the number of CEOs following the introduction of the resident parking scheme in Eastlands.

Members were advised that the Council had a right to enforce parking regulations and restrictions on any highway which the public had access to, regardless of whether this was adopted by the local authority or not.

In response to a member query around how to reduce the need for and reliance on resident parking schemes, the Executive Member for Environment and Transport highlighted the importance of connectivity within the city's travel network and the need for reliable alternatives to car use. She acknowledged that a behaviour change was required with a focus on education around the Highway Code. There was also a need to ensure communication between departments such as Highways and Neighbourhoods so that parking schemes worked to the benefit of residents.

The Head of Design Commissioning and PMO informed the committee that rule 243 of the Highway Code, which stipulated where drivers cannot park, was incorporated into every resident parking scheme to mitigate dangerous parking particularly around junctions. Measures such as creating double yellow lines by junctions were sometimes included in the introduction of a parking scheme to address these issues.

The Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) explained that the estimated £75k cost for the removal of the visitor permit charge and provision of scratchcards related to the collective impact of introducing the proposed changes compared to revenue which may have been received from a ringfenced reserve for reinvestment into parking-related services. It was felt that this cost was necessary to ensure a series of schemes and zones across the city which could operate effectively and respond to the needs of residents.

He expressed that there was no intention to generate income from the proposed changes and that any income from PCNs was held for reinvestment.

Decision:

That the Economy Scrutiny Committee endorses the Revised Resident Parking Scheme Policy for approval by the Executive.

ESC/23/5 Highways State of the City Annual Report 2021/22

The committee considered a report of the Head of Network Management, which provided an update on the substantial works completed and progress achieved by the Highways service and provided an overview of methods of communication to ensure ongoing engagement with residents and members, as well as the performance of the service during the financial year 2021/22.

The key points and themes within the report included:

- Manchester's highway network includes over 1,350 km of road length, 2,600 km of footway length and over 350 bridges and structures and the total highway asset has an indicative gross replacement value of over £3 billion, making it the Council's most valuable asset;

- Achievements for 2021/22, including the successful delivery of the 5-year capital investment programme, receiving £37.2m in funding from the Mayor's Challenge Fund to improve walking and cycling facilities, embedding social value and sustainability within procurement and establishing the Highways Access Group;
- Delivery of planned maintenance, inspections and repairs, street works, winter services, major projects and road safety;
- The Council's highway infrastructure assets are currently being maintained in a steady state, with improvements in several areas following the 5-year investment programme. Service delivery performance has generally been maintained with improvements in some areas and decreases in other areas.

Key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussions included:

- How many service requests had been opened in the past 12 months and whether there was a backlog of outstanding requests;
- The ability for Highways Inspectors and Operatives to resolve any unreported issues in the same visit to reduce repeated call-outs;
- Noting that speed is a major factor in road collisions;
- Expressing disappointment in the lack of a road safety budget due to government cuts;
- Noting that the Council is below the National Highways and Transport (NHT) average satisfaction score for road safety, and expressing hope that this could be improved in the future;
- What other measures were being taken to promote social value within the Highways service;
- Noting that there were no capital funds earmarked for Highways in 2023/24;
- The prioritisation scheme for gully repairs and the timescales around this; and
- Whether there would be provision for gullies to be repaired or replaced outside of the cyclical programme in 2023/24.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport opened discussions on the item and advised committee members that they could raise any ward-specific issues with her directly.

The Head of Network Management highlighted that the report related to 2021/22 and that reports were provided annually. He also welcomed any feedback around specific issues and areas to be included in future reports.

In response to a question from the Chair around the amount of service requests, the Head of Network Management explained that the number of requests were available by ward area. He stated that ward dashboards would be reimplemented so that members had sight of all outstanding and completed service requests. A new asset management system had also been procured which would link to the Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to provide real-time information as to the progress of service requests.

The Head of Network Management explained that Highways Inspectors could log service requests whilst carrying out their roles across the city. He stated that repairs contractors were provided with up-to-date information before jobs to ensure all outstanding repairs can be undertaken at the same time, where possible. He also informed members that the Council was taking a “find and fix” approach to new contracts so that repairs can be undertaken as quickly as possible.

Members were informed that the Highways service undertook a lot of work on road safety despite having no formal budget. Road safety was included within all highways improvement schemes and £2 million of funding had been received for road safety schemes in 2021/22. It was also stated that the Council was developing a pilot scheme to reduce all 40 and 50 miles-per-hour speed limits in Manchester to 30 miles-per-hour speed limits and the Council would be the first in the country to have no speed limits above 30mph if the scheme was successful. The Head of Network Management also highlighted how the Council worked to ensure a 20 mph speed limit on any new roads developed and that the Mayor of Greater Manchester had recently declared reduced speed limits as a priority and it was hoped that this may lead to funding being available in the future.

In response to a query around social and environmental value, the Head of Network Management stated that the service was always looking for different ways to do things which could be beneficial to carbon reduction and recycling. The Head of Design Commissioning and PMO expanded on this and explained that two specialists had been recruited with one officer responsible for social value and the Highways Access Group and the other responsible for environmental sustainability. There was an extensive list of social value achievements, including inclusive recruitment; donations in kind; tree-planting by developers; and promotional material for Road Safety Week in 2022 which had been funded by developers. The Head of Design Commissioning and PMO also explained that the Highways Access Group was formed in late 2021 and won the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Initiative of the Year Award at the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) industry awards in November 2022. The Group met monthly and included representatives from 10 external organisations.

In response to a query from the Chair regarding gullies, the Head of Network Management explained that there were two programmes of work – cyclical gully cleansing and the Highways Gully Improvement Programme. Records of broken and slow gullies were maintained, and the cyclical programme informed how these were running and whether additional works were needed. The current priority for gully repairs were those on the key route and community networks but members were assured that this would not prevent other urgent repairs to gullies not on these networks.

In summarising the discussion, the Chair suggested that a report on road safety be considered at a meeting in the new municipal year which the committee supported.

Decision:

That

1. the report be noted; and
2. the Committee requests that a report on road safety in Manchester be provided to a meeting in the new municipal year.

ESC/23/6 Overview Report

The committee considered a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which provided details of key decisions within the committee's remit and its work programme.

Decision:

That the report be noted.