

Executive

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 15 November 2023

Present: Councillor Craig (Chair)

Councillors: Akbar, Bridges, Hacking, Midgley, Rahman, Rawlins, T Robinson and White

Also present as Members of the Standing Consultative Panel:

Councillors: Ahmed Ali, Butt, Chambers, Douglas, Foley, Johnson, Leech, Lynch and Moran

Apologies: Councillor Igbon

Exe/23/95 Minutes

Decision

The Executive approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 18 October 2023.

Exe/23/96 Our Manchester Progress Update

The Executive considered a report of the Chief Executive which provided an update on key areas of progress against the Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025 which reset Manchester’s priorities for the next five years to ensure the Council could still achieve the city’s ambition set out in the Our Manchester Strategy 2016 – 2025.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development reported that Manchester had secured more than £3 million to support housing projects across the city which were bringing long-term brownfield land back into use. The funding, through Round 2 of the Government’s Brownfield Land Release Fund, would help build 210 homes in total, 119 of which would be affordable housing at sites across north and east Manchester, and one city centre site. 81 of the affordable homes being supported through the new brownfield funding were part of the Council’s Project 500 initiative which would be capped at the Manchester Living Rent.

The Deputy Leader (statutory) reported that the Council had begun a major conversation with Manchester people to inform the city’s 10 year cultural strategy. It was intended that the decade-long plan would build on the investments in culture which the city had made, building on the existing cultural vibrancy and extending its reach further.

The Deputy Leader reported that Warm Welcome spaces were again being provided for Manchester residents this autumn and winter as part of the Council’s cost-of-living support for residents. The city’s 22 libraries were again operating as warm welcome spaces, providing somewhere people could get out of the cold, especially if they are worried about heating costs and a range of other support for people who needed it. In

addition to the libraries, there were dozens of other community and volunteer-led spaces are joining the offer of support this year. All these spaces were free to access and people could stay as long as they like during opening hours.

The Deputy Leader also reported that a year on from Manchester receiving initial Living Wage City accreditation the number of employers paying the Real Living Wage has increased to 282, a rise of more than 50% which had exceeded the target set for both 2023 and 2024. Within newly accredited Real Wage employers, the number of jobs uplifted to a real wage had increased by more than 9,000 people – exceeding the 2023 target of 6,056 employees. Citywide, the number of people employed or contacted by Real Living Wage employers had increased by 13.2% since this time last year, with the proportion of jobs employed by accredited Living Wage employers increasing from 16.3% to 18.4%.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport reported on the Council's emerging Tree and Woodland Action Plan. A Council commissioned Growing Manchester's Trees study had looked at how the city's treescape had evolved and how it could be improved, and concluded that there was significant scope to increase the city's tree canopy cover from its current level of almost 19% of tree cover to almost 22%. The draft Tree and Woodland Action Plan envisaged the Council working with organisations and other stakeholders across the city towards that goal, which it was estimated would require 64,000 new trees, equivalent to 320 hectares of extra tree cover or an area the size of 600 football pitches.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport also reported that the latest data showed that the Oxford Road cycle route was more popular than ever with the millionth journey of the year being recorded on 20 October 2023 – a month earlier than last year. The cycleway was a flagship of the Council's ambition to improve cycling provision throughout the city as part of an effort to encourage active travel for shorter journeys, contributing towards the city's goal of becoming zero carbon by 2038 or earlier. At the same time, the route had improved the experience for pedestrians and created new public realm and green spaces.

Councillor Leech sought clarification as to whether the funding for bringing long-term brownfield land back into use was sufficient to address all brownfield sites and whether those that had been identified so far for remediation works were the most contaminated. He also sought clarification in respect of the Tree and Woodland Action Plan as to whether any consideration would be given to the retention of existing trees not subject to preservation orders as well as the planting of new trees

Councillor Johnson sought clarification as to the overall timescale for the Tree and Woodland Action Plan.

Decision

The Executive note the report.

Exe/23/97 Revenue Budget Monitoring (P6)

The Executive considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, which outlined the projected revenue outturn position for 2023/24, based on expenditure and income activity as at the end of September 2023 and future projections.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources advised that the current budget monitoring forecast was an overspend of £3.5m and there were considerable risks to the position relating to the impact of rising demand and increasing costs. The main pressures were being felt in the social care budgets reflecting the national pressures in the health and social care sector and trends being experienced across most social care providing local authorities.

The Children's Directorate was facing an overspend of £4.8m due to increased External Residential costs, Home to School Transport demand, workforce and price pressures and overspends in Localities and Fostering workforce budgets. The biggest pressure related to external residential placements and increased complexity of need of the current cohort with placement costs having increased by 47% in the current financial year.

The Adults Services Directorate was forecasting an overspend of £1.6m, driven by long term care placements and cost pressures which were outpacing demand management interventions. Neighbourhoods Directorate was also forecasting an overspend of £1.6m in relation to shortfalls of income in markets and car parking as income levels had failed to recover since the pandemic and alternative locations for the Christmas markets had not replaced the losses incurred at Albert Square.

These pressures were partly offset by a forecasted £2m utilities underspend due to the new contract for electricity, underspends of £1m in Public Health, arising from the confirmation of external funding; £1.2m income in Growth and Development due to increased rental income in the investment estate, revised recruitment assumptions and planning fee income and £0.4m in the Corporate Core, mainly due to staffing underspends.

Of the £25.2m of savings agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget process, £15.1m (60%) were on track for delivery, £1.5m (6%) were risk rated medium, and £8.5m (34%) rated high risk in terms of the likelihood of delivery. Officers were working to identify alternative savings where original plans might not be achieved or delayed.

It was also reported that the 2023/24 pay award had been agreed and budget allocations would be reported in the next revenue monitoring update.

In addition a small number of Additional Revenue Grants had been awarded since the 2023/24 budget was set and were now reflected in the revised budget position.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources noted that it was halfway through the financial year, and although significant progress had been made in bringing the position closer to balanced continued vigilance was needed, given there were significant uncertainties and risks to the position as demand and inflationary pressures could increase. Any overspend this year would be a direct call on the General Fund reserve which would need to be reimbursed in future years. In addition,

any ongoing impact of the pressures faced this year would need to be addressed in the 2024/25 budget. It was therefore important mitigations continued to be identified to bring forecasted spend back in line with the available budget.

Councillor Leech queried if there was any potential for economies of scale across Greater Manchester to address the budget pressures within Children's Services and whether any consideration had been made to looking to provide additional places at appropriate schools to alleviate the budget pressures on the Home to School transport service.

In relation to car parking income, Councillor Leech sought clarification as to whether it was ever likely that the income would return to pre-covid levels and if not whether it would more appropriate to readjust the budget income for this service rather than continue to use reserves to make up for the shortfall. He also sought clarification of how likely it was for those proposed savings rated as high risk to be achieved within the current financial year.

Councillor Johnson queried what levers the Council could utilise to help address the challenges that were being faced in recruiting to certain vacant posts in Directorates.

Decisions

The Executive:-

- (1) Note the global forecast outturn position which is showing a £3.5m overspend.
- (2) Approve the use of revenue grant funding as detailed below and outlined in paragraph 2.9 of the report:-
 - Chief Executives – Electoral Integrity Programme - £25k
 - APDS Pilot: Off street car park and kerbside availability project - £200k
 - Purchase of Assheton archive collection - £102k
 - Early years supplementary grant - £1.886m

Exe/23/98 Capital Programme Monitoring (P6) and Update

The Executive considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, which provided an update on progress against the delivery of the 2023/24 capital programme to the end of September 2023, the latest forecast of capital expenditure and the major variances since the Capital Programme Outturn report submitted in September 2023 and the proposed financing of capital expenditure for 2023/24 and affordability of the Capital Programme.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources advised that the latest forecast of expenditure for 2023/24 was £401.0m compared to the current approved budget of £496.3m. Spend as of 30 September 2023 was £141.7m. The main variances related to the Asset Management Programme, Back of Ancoats Mobility Hub and Public Realm, Our Town Hall Refurbishment, This City Housing Delivery Vehicle, Public Sector Housing Programme, Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and Varley Street SEND Secondary School. These variances mostly related to timing differences meaning reprofiling would be required.

A more focussed look at the top 10 projects was provided in Appendix A. These projects covered 47% of the total programme. The programme also contained some budgets yet to be allocated to specific projects but reserved for a particular purpose. These would be allocated once the specific schemes were progressed and approved, or in the case of inflation the business case showing the impact of inflationary pressures on a scheme completed. They would also then be subject to approval through the Council's capital approval process.

It had previously been reported that many projects in the capital programme had faced an extremely challenging two year period with intense pressures on costs due to extraordinary levels of inflation and unprecedented pressure on the supply chain (labour and materials availability). These pressures continued to be seen and remained a significant risk across the capital programme. Inflation in the UK in the 12 months to September 2023, as measured through CPI, was currently 6.7%, which was static from August 2023, but down from 6.8% in July and from a recent peak of 11.1% in October 2022. Whilst this showed a downward trend which was expected to continue, the figure remained relatively elevated.

The current forecasts showed that the financing costs remained affordable within the revenue budget available including reserves. The capital financing reserves would start to be drawn down to meet the costs associated with the borrowing by 2026/27, however, the model was based on a significant number of assumptions, including the timing of future borrowing and forecast future interest rates and the position was subject to change.

In addition, it was reported that there were schemes that had been developed or had received external funding that were now ready for inclusion in the Capital Programme. The proposals which required Council approval were those which were funded by the use of reserves above a cumulative total of £10 million, where the use of borrowing was required or a virement exceeded £1m. These included the following proposed changes:-

- Children's Services - Levenshulme High School for Girls – 2024 Expansion. A budget increase of £2.5m was requested, funded by borrowing, to deliver an additional 100 places of secondary education for Manchester residents at Levenshulme High School, increasing the total capacity of the school from 1,000 to 1,100 places
- Children's Services – Chorlton High School (CHS) South – 2024 Expansion. A budget increase of £4.2m was requested, funded by borrowing, to deliver an additional 150 places of secondary education for Manchester residents at CHS South by creating additional classrooms within a new teaching block
- Growth and Development - Carbon Reduction Programme 2024-25. A budget increase of £0.5m was requested, funded by borrowing on an invest to save basis, to allow for further surveys to be commissioned across the Council's corporate estate to allow for the creation of a 15-year fully costed roadmap to zero carbon.

The proposals which only required Executive approval were those which were funded by the use of external resources, use of capital receipts, use of reserves below

£10.0m, where the proposal could be funded from existing revenue budgets or where the use of borrowing on a spend to save basis is required. The following proposals required Executive approval for changes to the City Council's capital programme:-

- ICT – Next Generation End User Experience. A revenue budget increase of £0.068m was requested, funded from the Capital Fund reserve, to upgrade all end user devices to windows 11, which was required as windows 10 would be at end of life in 2025.
- Private Sector Housing – Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). A capital budget increase of £3.166m was requested, funded by £0.740m Government Grant and £2.426m external contribution, to facilitate home adaptations for people with disabilities to enable them to live as independently and safely as possible in their homes.
- Growth and Development - New Smithfield Market. A Capital budget of £0.248m in was requested, funded by £0.124m RCCO from the New Smithfield Market reserve fund and £0.124m Capital Receipts, to contribute to the unidentified ground remediation costs which had been arisen during the demolition process by the incoming tenants.
- Highways Services - Patching Defect Repairs 2023-24 additional funding. A capital budget increase of £1.5m was requested, funded by external contribution, to continue with the delivery of the patching programme to fulfil the Council's legal obligation to maintain the carriageway and footway network by repairing actionable defects identified during safety inspections.

The report also provided an update on delivery of the Manchester Cycleway Construction (Fallowfield Loop and Yellow Brick Road) following a successful bid for £2.52m funding from Tranche 4 of the Department for Transport Active Travel Fund (ATF4).

Councillor Leech welcomed the additional funding for highways patch defect repairs and queried if this would be deliverable within the current financial year. He also sought clarification as to whether officers were confident that the Factory project would be delivered on budget without the need for any further budget increases.

Decisions:-

The Executive:-

- (1) Note the Progress against the delivery of the 2023/24 capital programme to the end of September 2023
- (2) Recommends that the Council approve the following changes to the Council's capital programme:-
 - Children's Services - Levenshulme High School for Girls – 2024 Expansion. A budget increase of £2.5m funded by borrowing
 - Children's Services – Chorlton High School (CHS) South – 2024 Expansion. . A budget increase of £4.2m funded by borrowing
 - Growth and Development - Carbon Reduction Programme 2024-25. A budget increase of £0.5m funded by borrowing on a invest to save basis

(3) Approve the following changes to the Council's capital programme:-

- ICT – Next Generation End User Experience. A revenue budget increase of £0.068m funded from the Capital Fund reserve.
- Private Sector Housing – Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). A capital budget increase of £3.166m funded by £0.740m Government Grant and £2.426m external contribution.
- Growth and Development - New Smithfield Market. A capital budget increase of £0.248m, funded by £0.124m RCCO from the New Smithfield Market reserve fund and £0.124m Capital Receipts.
- Highways Services - Patching Defect Repairs 2023-24 additional funding. A capital budget increase of £1.5m funded by external contribution.

Exe/23/99 Investing in Success: An Economic Strategy for Manchester

The Executive considered a report of the Strategic Director (Growth and Development), which proposed a new Economic Strategy for Manchester, including a description of the economic context and the development process.

The Leader reported that Manchester had an ambition to grow in a fairer and more sustainable way whilst ensuring the city's economy remained competitive, diverse and dynamic. As such, a new Economic Strategy for Manchester had been developed that set out how Manchester would continue to achieve economic growth whilst ensuring that the benefits of growth were felt more evenly across the city.

The proposed strategy was built on a robust evidence base that took into account a range of information and perspectives. It showed that economic growth had been beneficial for Manchester, and that in many ways the city had economically outperformed its UK and international comparators. At the same time it recognised that growth also created new challenges for the city, but that only by becoming a wealthier and more prosperous place could the city resolve some of the most difficult challenges it faced.

The vision for the strategy was to see Manchester's economy function as a net-contributor to UK GDP and provide the best possible opportunities for our residents. In doing so, the strategy aimed to create an economy that:-

- Was thriving and performing as well as the best international comparators;
- Created great opportunities for people who live here;
- Attracted the best of global business and talent;
- Helped increase social mobility for our residents; and
- Was resilient to future shocks and a changing climate and capitalised on the opportunities created by the transition to net-zero

The full strategy and its objectives were detailed in appendix 1 to the report. The objective were fundamentally structured under five themes:-

- I. Use investment and development to drive inclusive growth;

- II. Nurture thriving, productive and innovative sectors;
- III. Develop world class infrastructure, places and talent;
- IV. Transition to a zero carbon and resilient economy; and
- V. Include more people in economic opportunity

The Strategy would ultimately be accountable to the Our Manchester Forum, the group which oversaw delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy, and which was made up of leaders from across the city. It would also report periodically to the Council's Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. To measure success and track progress indicators that helped illustrate Manchester's economic performance against national trends had been identified which would also help judge the extent to which Manchester residents were evenly benefitting from growth.

The full strategy would be designed and published by the end of November 2023 with a launch event taking place towards the end of the month.

Councillor Leech welcomed the strategy and the plans for additional 10,000 affordable homes referenced within it, but noted that this would not address the total number of affordable homes needed for Manchester residents. He also sought clarification as to whether the priorities within the strategy had an equal ranking in relation to their delivery.

Councillor Johnson sought clarification as to what steps could be taken to mitigate the carbon impact on the city's economic growth.

Decision

The Executive agree to adopt the new Economic Strategy for Manchester.

Exe/23/100 ACES European Capital of Cycling

The Executive considered a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods), which provided an overview of Manchester's bid to become ACES European Capital of Cycling for 2024.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure advised that ACES Europe had identified and invited Manchester to become a candidate for its inaugural European Capital of Cycling 2024 and expressed that Manchester would be a strong candidate. The accolade had not been awarded previously, therefore if Manchester were successful, the city would be the first European city to be awarded the title. The opportunity could also be used as a catalyst to transform and enhance the city's cycling offer, enabling Manchester to expand and grow its cycling provision.

The outcome of Manchester's candidature would be announced at the ACES Europe Gala event in Brussels, which would take place in early December. If successful in securing the award, Manchester's Capital of Cycling year would commence in January 2024 for 12 months and leave a long-lasting legacy for cycling in Manchester and a programme of events was being developed to drive community activation, identifying existing programmes to build on and new interventions which encouraged active travel and widen participation in cycling.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure advised that should the bid be successful, the Council would develop a year-long campaign with the objective of raising the profile of Manchester's world class cycling facilities, driving participation with community groups and facilities, as well as highlighting the investment and delivery of cycling infrastructure.

Councillor Leech sought clarification that if the bid was successful, this would result in potential more external funding becoming available for cycling within the city. He also sought an assurance that there would not be any additional revenue or capital costs to deliver Manchester's ambition to expand and grow its cycling provision.

Decision

The Executive endorse Manchester's bids to become ACES European Capital of Cycling for 2024.

Exe/23/101 Manchester Local Care Organisation Commissioning Plan

The Executive considered a report of the Executive Director (Adult Social Services), which provided an update on the Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO) Commissioning Plan and how responsive commissioning had evolved over the past two years as part of Better Outcomes Better Lives Transformation Programme.

The Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Services advised that the Plan was the second iteration following the first publication in October 2021, as part of the Better Outcomes Better Lives transformation programme and the development of the 'Responsive Commissioning' Workstream.

To this effect, the Commissioning Plan was an engagement tool, particularly for the external care marketplace to share the vision, priorities and direction of travel within the commissioning landscape within the spirit of coproduction and working together with partners, stakeholders and providers to deliver high quality, safe and effective care for Manchester residents.

The MLCO Commissioning Board met monthly and ensured oversight of the delivery of the Plan. There were a high number of actions for delivery – 58 in total, and progress was measured on a quarterly basis via the Board.

Decision

The Executive note the report.

Exe/23/102 Hackney Carriage Fare review - outcome of consultation on proposed fare increases

The Executive considered a report of the Strategic Director (Growth and Development, which sought approval to agree increases to Hackney Carriage Fare Tariffs following the outcome of recent consultation on the proposals.

It was noted that seven written objections to the proposed fare changes had been received. The reasons given for not agreeing with the proposed increase were:-

- Private hire companies were cheaper and therefore the increase would mean more lost business;
- Customer feedback to drivers was that they were expensive anyway;
- Upfront flag was too high and could have an adverse effect; and
- The cost of other public transport was getting cheaper so it was believed this will kill the trade

Whilst being mindful of the ongoing cost of living for the public, he proposed fare changes were believed to represent a balance between a reasonable payment for a hackney carriage journey and income for the driver and proprietor. The proposed tariff was also comparable with other core cities.

The Licensing & Appeals Committee had endorsed the proposed increases at its meeting on 23 October 2023

Decisions

The Executive:-

(1) Agree the following increases:-

- An increase in the unit cost per mile on all tariffs by 8%
- An increase in the waiting time fare by 23%
- An increase in the Day flag tariff to £3.40
- An increase in the Night flag tariff to £3.80

(2) Note that Officers will make arrangements with the meter companies to reconfigure Taximeters.

Exe/23/103 Manchester's new ageing strategy, Manchester: a city for life 2023-2028

The Executive considered a report of the Director of Public Health, which sought approval of a details of a new age friendly strategy *Manchester: a city for life 2023-2028*, which was scheduled to be officially launched on 28 November 2023.

The Executive Member for Healthy Manchesters and Adult Social Care advise that the new strategy attached had been produced following extensive engagement with the Age Friendly Manchester (AFM) Older People's Board (the Board), with people aged over 50 at the Age Friendly Assembly (the Assembly) and direct collaboration with key strategic partners, services, and frontline workers. The strategy was fully aligned to the Making Manchester Fairer Action Plan and Anti-Poverty Strategy (2022-2027).

The new strategy built on previous progress and looked to a vision for Manchester over the next five years, while proposing a series of immediate and preventative responses to address the ongoing impact of the pandemic and the ensuing cost-of-living crisis on the over 50s. It outlined a series of priorities and commitments to drive

better outcomes so that more people could age well in place with increased financial security.

Drawing on eight key features which went towards making an age friendly city as identified by the World Health Organization, Manchester had identified the following four key themes that the new strategy would look to address:

- Being Heard and Age Equality
- Age Friendly Neighbourhoods where we can all Age in Place
- Age Friendly Services that support us to Age Well
- Work and Money

The delivery plan to accompany the strategy was being finalised and would be presented to the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee in draft form in December 2023, with the final version issued in January 2024. The delivery plan was essentially the mechanism through which the Making Manchester Fairer ambitions were realised for people aged over 50. The delivery plan would have a specific focus on issues such as social isolation, volunteering, digital inclusion, climate change and have a read across to other key developments such as the work of the Manchester Dementia Steering Group.

Decision

The Executive approve and endorse the strategy.