

# **Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 9 January 2020**

### **Present:**

Councillor Hacking - In the Chair

Councillors Andrews, Battle, Chambers, Collins, M Dar, Doswell, Douglas, Evans, Grimshaw, Hitchen, Kirkpatrick, Rawlins and Rawson

Councillor S Murphy, Deputy Leader

Councillor N Murphy, Deputy Leader

Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure

Dr Marc Hudson, Climate Emergency Manchester

### **CESC/20/1 Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2019 as a correct record.

### **CESC/20/2 Updated Financial Strategy and Budget Reports 2020/21**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, which provided an update on the Council's overall financial position and set out the next steps in the budget process. In doing so, the report outlined officer proposals for how the Council could deliver a balanced budget for 2020/21.

In conjunction with the above, the Committee also received and considered the draft Council Business Plan for 2020/21 and the Neighbourhoods Directorate Budget Report 2020/21.

Officers highlighted that the 2020/21 budget would be a one year roll over budget. It would reflect the fact the Council had declared a climate emergency and would also continue to reflect the priorities identified in the previous three-year budget strategy.

Taken together, the reports illustrated how the directorate would work to deliver the Our Corporate Plan and progress towards the vision set out in the Our Manchester Strategy.

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

- That some of the data provided in appendix 1 of the Council Business Plan 2020/21, for example on anti-social behaviour and flytipping, did not give a clear picture of the situation as it stated figures per 1000 people and did not provide enough information, for example, on trends over time and whether some areas were affected more than others;

- Why were there no figures for 2018/19 on residents attending a cultural event or using a public library service;
- Sickness levels across different teams and the impact on service delivery;
- That it was not clear from the report where Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) would be carried out and the importance of the Committee considering the impact of proposals across the equality strands;
- The changes to the rules on the use of Household Recycling Centres and how fly-tipping was being addressed;
- How the proposed savings of £40,000 from reducing the costs of gallery exhibitions would be achieved;
- How confident were officers that the increases in income outlined in the Directorate Budget Report could be achieved; and
- To seek assurance that investment in the Anti-Social Behaviour Team was not being reduced and to emphasise the importance of funding work to address anti-social behaviour, which was a priority for many residents.

The Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) reported that this was the first time that budget proposals had been presented to the scrutiny committees in this format and that officers would take on board Members' comments on how this information was presented and review this for future budget-setting processes. She reported that the Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee had considered the changes to the rules on the use of Household Recycling Centres at its meeting on 8 January 2020 and that officers would be providing a detailed update to that Committee. She informed Members that the Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee also received detailed information on fly-tipping and suggested that the report on fly-tipping which the Committee had received at a recent meeting could be circulated to Members of this Committee, to which the Chair agreed.

The Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) reported that the HR Subgroup regularly received information on sickness levels across the Council and what was being done to tackle this but that Members of the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee could be provided with data on sickness levels for areas within its remit.

The Chair commented that, at the Committee's February meeting, Members would receive a report on the EIAs from the previous year's budget process.

The Head of Libraries, Galleries and Culture reported that the data in the report on residents attending cultural events and using libraries came from a national survey; however, he reported that his service had been improving its own data collection as part of the Widening Access and Participation project. He drew Members' attention to the reports provided to the Committee's October, November and December 2019 meetings which had included further information on residents' access to and participation in libraries, leisure and culture and advised Members that he would collate this information and re-circulate it.

The Head of Libraries, Galleries and Culture informed Members how his service proposed to save £40,000 through the Museum and Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief Scheme introduced by the government in 2017. He outlined how his service planned to increase its income through introducing wireless printing across the city's libraries, delivering government services, enabling visitors to make contactless donations at

Manchester Art Gallery and Central Library, increasing retail sales, particularly from tourists following the re-location of the Visitor Information Centre to the Central Library, and raising more income through venue hire.

The Head of Parks, Leisure, Youth and Events outlined how his service had increased income generation, highlighting that in parks alone income generation had increased by approximately £400,000 since 2016. He advised Members that his service had met its income generation targets for the past three years and that he was confident that the income targets set out in the report were achievable. In response to a Member's question, he reported that a process was being put in place for residents and community groups to put forward their ideas for how to reduce the gap between income and expenditure in parks.

The Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) clarified that the money which had been approved during 2019/20 to increase resources in the Anti-Social Behaviour Team had been committed to for a period of three years.

## **Decisions**

1. To support the proposals outlined in the reports, while asking the Executive to take into account Members' comments above, in particular the importance of maintaining funding to tackle anti-social behaviour.
2. To request that the recent report that the Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee received on fly-tipping be circulated to Committee Members, for information.

## **CESC/20/3 Capital Strategy for Leisure Facilities**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which provided an update on the Leisure Capital Programme which was seeking to sustain, develop and enhance the facility asset base over the next 20 years. The Leisure Capital Programme was currently funded through a mixture of external grants and contributions, capital receipts, borrowing and spend to save capital investment. The report set out the current pipeline programme and proposals of investment. The programme followed the Council's Capital Finance process and was subject to individual business cases and a clear funding strategy to inform the strategic consideration and feasibility of each scheme.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:

- Background information;
- Capital Investment Strategy;
- Proposed Capital Programme and Pipeline; and
- Capital Strategy Governance.

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

- Request for assurance that Ward Councillors would be involved in decisions about how any funding arising from Section 106 agreements between the Council and developers would be spent;
- Sufficiency of leisure provision;
- How it would be ensured that the planned synthetic cricket wickets would be maintained and used;
- What the start date and completion dates were for the capital projects; and
- That a lot of the proposed projects in table 3 of the report were dependent on obtaining external funding and what was being done to support the applications for this funding.

The Head of Parks, Leisure, Youth and Events advised that his service had recognised the need for increased engagement with Ward Councillors. He reported that officers had engaged with Ward Councillors in relation to the Playing Pitch Strategy to enable them to shape the ward plans and ensure that officers understood their priorities if Section 106 funding became available. He informed Members that leisure provision was currently sufficient to meet demand but that, as the city's population grew, it was anticipated that there would gaps in some parts of the city which would need to be addressed, including around Hough End and in the city centre. He reported that 100 synthetic cricket wickets were being installed in parks across Greater Manchester, funded by the English Cricket Board, that the Greater Manchester Combined Authority was providing additional funding for cricket programmes and coaching to ensure that they were fully used and that the Council had committed to maintaining them properly.

The Head of Parks, Leisure, Youth and Events informed Members that, where the start date and completion date for the capital projects were known they had been included in the appendix. He proposed to continue to update this as further information became known and make the information available to Members. He advised Members that, while many of the proposed projects in table 3 were reliant on external funding, a lot of this was funding from Sport England which had already been ring-fenced for Manchester so there was a higher degree of certainty that those projects would go ahead. In response to a Member's question, he agreed to update the table to provide clarity on the degree of certainty that funding would be obtained, particularly where this related to ring-fenced funding; however, he advised that projects had only been included in the table if there was a very strong chance of success and that many other projects which were currently being discussed but were less certain had not been included.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure informed Members that MCRactive had a small, dedicated team which worked with community groups to build their capacity and increase the likelihood of them successfully bidding for funding.

## **Decisions**

1. To note the Capital Strategy for Leisure Facilities and the update on the various projects.

2. To note that a separate report detailing the Playing Pitch Strategy will be provided for a future meeting of the Committee.

#### **CESC/20/4 Our Manchester Campaigning Engagement Framework**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which provided an overview of the external engagement programme for Our Manchester, which aimed to support Our Manchester to be more bottom-up and generated by residents.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:

- Background to the framework;
- The key areas of the Campaigning Engagement Framework; and
- The framework's objectives and how these were being delivered.

The Deputy Leader Councillor Sue Murphy reported that this was the next stage of the Our Manchester project, focusing on building on the engagement which was already taking place with local communities to ensure that the Council was doing what residents wanted to improve the quality of life in their neighbourhoods.

In response to a Member's question, the Our Manchester Programme Lead advised that she would provide the Member with an update on the North Inquiry after the meeting.

A Member reported that the work in Sharston, outlined in appendix 1, had been well-received by local residents. Another Member commented that he had initially been sceptical about Our Manchester but that it had been a success.

#### **Decision**

To note the report.

#### **CESC/20/5 Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy - Deputy Leader Councillor Sue Murphy's Portfolio**

The Committee received a report of Deputy Leader Councillor Sue Murphy which provided an overview of work undertaken and progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the Our Manchester Strategy for those areas within her portfolio.

The main themes within the report included:

- Our Manchester;
- Social inclusion;
- Voluntary and community sector;
- Homelessness and rough sleeping;
- International work; and
- Local Government Association (LGA).

The Chair invited Dr Marc Hudson from Climate Emergency Manchester to speak. He welcomed that the Council had declared a Climate Emergency and encouraged Ward Councillors to take further action within their wards to address climate change. He outlined the role of his organisation and drew Members' attention to the reports on its website which, he advised, scrutinised progress made in relation to the Climate Emergency Declaration and proposed other achievable actions which could be taken. He highlighted that addressing climate change was a collective responsibility and welcomed that the Executive Member for Children and Schools had included a section on the work he had undertaken to address climate change in his report to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. He encouraged the other Executive Members to do the same in future reports to the relevant scrutiny committees. In response to a Member's question on what he felt the Council could do better to tackle climate change, he encouraged Members to read the report his organisation had produced entitled 'With Love and Rockets' and advised that he could send this to Committee Members. He recommended that the Executive, Chief Executive and Ward Councillors communicate more with the public on climate change, including sharing information on what was being done in their wards and what could be done. He also reported that no carbon literacy training sessions for Members or officers had taken place within the last quarter. He also expressed concern that the Council needed to do more to tackle emissions related to its own transport. He offered to speak to any Councillors further on this issue.

Both Deputy Leaders supported the suggestion that future reports from Executive Members include a section on what they were doing to address climate change. In response to a Member's question, Deputy Leader Councillor Sue Murphy reported that, through Our Manchester, the Council was funding projects in communities to tackle climate change, such as the Poisonous Playgrounds pilot project which aimed to reduce the impact of traffic pollution on school children in the playground. She advised that, if this was successful, it would be expanded. She also reported that, through her international work, she was learning what other cities around the world were doing to address climate change.

In response to a Member's request for demographic information to show how her work was helping Manchester residents across all the equality strands, the Deputy Leader Councillor Sue Murphy advised that she could look into how this could be better demonstrated in future reports. In response to a Member's question, she outlined work taking place to address homelessness, including the learning from a recent LGA event on homelessness.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

## **CESC/20/6 Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy - Deputy Leader Councillor Nigel Murphy's Portfolio**

The Committee received a report of Deputy Leader Councillor Nigel Murphy which provided an overview of work undertaken and progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the Our Manchester Strategy for those areas within his portfolio.

The main themes within the report included:

- Employment Charter;
- Anti-social behaviour;
- Employment opportunities for local people; and
- Policing.

In response to a Member's question, Deputy Leader Councillor Nigel Murphy reported that 56 of the 220 neighbourhood police officers referred to in the report would be assigned to work in Manchester and that the city would also benefit from the 50 additional officers working on the travel network and the 50 officers allocated to the new proactive Force-wide team which would be deployed to address local problems and priorities without taking resources from the neighbourhood policing teams; however, he advised that it would take time for new officers to be trained so the impact would not be seen immediately. He reported that, in addition to these officers who were funded through the police precept, the Home Office had agreed to fund some additional police officers for Greater Manchester but the details of how many and where they would be allocated was still being determined. He advised that he would keep the Committee updated on this.

In response to a Member's concerns about anti-social behaviour in her ward, Deputy Leader Councillor Nigel Murphy reported that, although funding had been allocated to double the number of Council officers on the Anti-Social Behaviour team, it took time to get new staff in place. He offered to speak to the Member outside the meeting about the particular issues within her ward. He also updated Members on the Our Town Hall refurbishment project, advising them that steps were being taken to mitigate the carbon impact. He reported that updates on this project were provided to the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee but that he was happy to provide updates to other Members.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

## **CESC/20/7 Overview Report**

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained a list of key decisions yet to be taken within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

## **Decision**

To note the report and agree the work programme.