

# **Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2018**

### **Present:**

Councillor Stone – in the Chair

Councillors Sameem Ali [CYP/18/43 - CYP/18/46], Hewitson, T Judge, Lovecy, McHale, Madeleine Monaghan and Sadler

### Co-opted Voting Members:

Mrs B Kellner, Representative of the Diocese of Manchester

Ms M Neall, Parent Governor Representative

Ms Z Stepan, Parent Governor Representative

### Co-opted Non Voting Members:

Mr L Duffy, Secondary sector teacher representative

Mr R Lammas, Primary sector teacher representative

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children's Services

Councillor Craig, Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing

Councillor Midgley, Mental Health Champion

Professor Craig Harris, Executive Director of Nursing and Safeguarding, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning

Darren Parsonage, Deputy Head of Commissioning, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning

Dr Walid Omara, Parent Governor

### **Apologies:**

Councillor Alijah

Mrs J Miles, Representative of the Diocese of Salford

### **CYP/18/41 Councillor Collins and Ms M Neall, Parent Governor Representative**

The Chair informed the Committee that this would be that last meeting attended by Councillor Collins and Ms Neall, Parent Governor Representative. The Chair thanked them both for their valued contribution to the Committee over the previous years.

### **CYP/18/42 Minutes**

### **Decision**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2018.

## **CYP/18/43 Children and Young People's Health Including Mental Health Programme**

The Committee received a report of the Professor Craig Harris, Executive Director of Nursing and Safeguarding, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning which provided detailed information on the actions taken to deliver the children and young people's transformation programme, to ensure the system provided the best support for all children and young people and the right support at the right time for those who were most vulnerable.

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

- Providing a description and ambition of the Children and Young People's (CYP) plan;
- An update on the Children and Young People's summit and how this had informed the development of the CYP transformation programme and work streams;
- A description of the CYP integrated commissioning strategy;
- A description of the CYP transformation steering group and programme work streams;
- Information on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and transforming care;
- Measures to prevent avoidable hospital admissions and reduce the length of stay in hospital;
- The protocols, procedures and quality assurance for children with complex needs;
- Children and young people's mental health and care that focused on prevention, early identification, early intervention and self-care;
- Vulnerable groups (including safeguarding and Our Children);
- Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership CYP health and wellbeing framework;
- What was known about CYP mental health in Manchester;
- CYP mental health outcomes; and
- The Greater Manchester Review of Children's Services.

Councillor Midgley, Mental Health Champion, had been invited to address the Committee. She said that she welcomed the report and the holistic approach to children and young people's health. She reported that, in her experience, staff working in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) were dedicated and caring professionals; however, she had concerns regarding the caseloads of staff. She commented that additional funding and research into this important area of care was required. She asked for clarification regarding waiting times for young people accessing services. She further commented that more needed to be done to offer community-based prevention services, stating that investment in these models of care would be more cost effective than crisis services and ultimately better for young people and their families. She enquired about the important role of the Voluntary and Community Sector and how this work was being coordinated.

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

- Welcoming the voice of young people being present throughout the work described;
- Did Our Children (children looked after by the local authority) have the same access to CAHMS and what provision was made for any children who were placed out of area;
- Further information was sought regarding the Kooth service;
- An explanation was sought regarding the reported 64% increase in requests for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs);
- To request that a specific report on CAMHS be submitted to the Committee that included case studies, information on the delivery and future planning of services in the context of financial cuts and an analysis of outcomes; and
- To request a future update report on Children and Young People's Health including information on young people's dental health, obesity, malnutrition and school nurses.

Professor Harris acknowledged the request from the Committee for a specific report on CAHMS and confirmed that this would be provided. He said that there was dedicated funding for CAHMS but that the demand on services had increased. He said it was acknowledged that services need to be transformed and redesigned to deliver a holistic model of care for children and young people with an emphasis on prevention and improving the early help offer. He confirmed that Our Children did have access to CAHMS and for those children placed out of area, services would be commissioned in the host area. In regard to the issue of out of area placements for children and young people he said that the ambition was to reduce the number of these to zero by 2021. He commented that work was underway to coordinate the Voluntary and Community Sector offer and further information on this work stream would be provided in the CAHMS report. He advised that information on caseloads and waiting times would also be included in the report.

The Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing recommended that the report on CAHMS should include information on the transition from children's to adult services and that any relevant reports that were to be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board would be shared with the Committee.

Darren Parsonage, the Deputy Head of Commissioning, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning, reported that the Kooth service was a free, 24/7 online counselling service for 11-18 year olds. He said that users could access this anonymously, access 1-2-1 counselling and participate in monitored chat room group discussions. He informed Members that workers from this service had engaged and delivered sessions with pupils in schools that had received positive feedback from both staff and young people. He reported that this service was also promoted in GP practices across the city.

The Strategic Director of Children's and Education Services explained that the reported increase in requests for EHCPs was as a result of the growing school age population in the city.

## **Decisions**

1. To request that a report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services be submitted to the Committee.
2. To request that an update report on Children and Young People's Health be considered at the May 2019 meeting and that this report include information on dental health, obesity, malnutrition and school nurses.
3. To request that the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, write to the relevant Government Minister to lobby for additional funding for children and young people's mental health services.
4. To note that any relevant reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board would also be circulated to Committee Members.

## **CYP/18/44 Early Help Strategy**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children's and Education Services which provided a further update on the progress and impact of the Early Help Strategy and the delivery of the offer of Early Help. The report covered the refresh of the Early Help Strategy in 2018, highlighted the activity and impact from the Early Help Hubs, and outlined future priorities.

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

- Governance and Accountability Arrangements;
- Early Help Strategy;
- Early Help Hubs and Partnerships;
- Work undertaken with schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs);
- Performance and Impact;
- Early Help Assessments;
- Impact of the Early Help Hubs;
- Quality Assurance; and
- Future Priorities.

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

- Request to see the analysis of the Troubled Families outcomes for 2017;
- Members' positive experiences of visiting the Early Help Hub in south Manchester;
- How the relationship with schools could be improved;
- Request for a breakdown of the statistics at ward or district level;
- Concern about the number of referrals related to homelessness due to rent arrears; and
- What was "Liquid Logic".

The Strategic Director of Children's and Education Services informed Members that Liquid Logic was the provider of the new IT system for recording cases and generating data which would go live in May 2019. He reported that he and the Director of Education were having conversations with school leadership teams on how they could work more effectively together to make limited resources go further. The Strategic Lead for Early Help and Interventions informed Members that her service was doing a lot of work with schools. She outlined work taking place with the PRUs and the learning which had come from that. She reported that there was a school attendance officer based in every Early Help Hub and that staff in the Hubs worked closely with Education Caseworkers and with schools and families around attendance issues and in-school behaviour. She informed Members that Bridging the Gap sessions were now taking place to provide advice and guidance in relation to specific cases and to share general information. She reported that since 2015 90% of schools had completed an Early Help Assessment and that training had been provided to schools staff which had resulted in an increase in Early Help Assessments. She reported that her service was speaking to schools about any barriers which stopped them from engaging with this work and looking at how these could be addressed; however, she advised that there could still be positive early intervention work going on in these schools, which they were not recording through the Early Help Assessment process.

The Executive Member for Children's Services acknowledged that the Council needed to respond better on the issue of homelessness, due to cuts in government support, and reported he would be meeting with officers and Executive Members with responsibility for housing, homelessness and adult social care to identify ways to improve the Council's response.

## **Decisions**

1. To request to that the analysis of the Troubled Families outcomes for 2017 be provided to Members of the Committee.
2. To request a breakdown of the Early Help statistics at ward or district level.
3. To receive an update report in a year's time.

[Councillor Stone declared a personal interest as a member of the governing body of the Secondary Pupil Referral Unit.]

## **CYP/18/45 Children's Services Score Care (Proxy Indicators)**

The Committee received a presentation of the Deputy Director of Children's Services which provided proxy indicators on progress to improve children's services.

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

- Registrations for Early Help Assessments (EHAs);
- Referral rates to children's social care;

- The percentage of children subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time; and
- Children Missing from Home.

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

- That Members were satisfied with the format in which this information was presented, noting that this information would be provided to the Committee on a quarterly basis;
- The different targets for primary and secondary schools on the scorecard and whether Ofsted judgements provided a useful measure of schools' performance; and
- Whether it was appropriate to have targets for factors over which the Council did not have control.

The Chair reported that Committee Members would receive a training session on the Ofsted Frameworks and on school attainment measures, including Progress 8, arranged by the Scrutiny Team Leader, and requested an update on when this would be delivered. The Strategic Director of Children's and Education Services advised that some of the figures in the presentation were for benchmarking purposes rather than being targets and were used to compare Manchester with other cities. He reported that the figures were intended to provoke a conversation and that the most important thing was how the Council responded to this information.

## **Decisions**

1. To continue to receive this information on a quarterly basis.
2. To request an update on progress to arrange a training session for Members, to include the Ofsted Frameworks and school attainment measures.

## **CYP/18/46 Overview Report**

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

The Chair commented that he would review the Work Programme and agree an appropriate meeting date for the report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to be submitted for consideration.

## **Decision**

To note the report and agree the work programme, noting the comments from the Chair.

# **Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2018**

### **Present:**

Councillor Igbon – in the Chair

Councillors Azra Ali, Appleby, Flanagan, Harland, Hewitson, Hughes, Jeavons, Kilpatrick, Lyons, Noor, Reid, Sadler, Strong, White and Wright

Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

Councillor N Murphy, Deputy Leader

Councillor Stogia, Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport

Councillor Richards, Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration

Councillor Karney, Ward Member for Harpurhey

Councillor A. Simcock, Ward Member for Didsbury East

Guy, resident of St Georges, Hulme

**Apologies:** Councillors Chohan and Hassan

### **NESC/18/35            Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2018 as a correct record.

### **NESC/18/36            Housing Issues**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Housing and Residential Growth which provided information on a range of housing related areas.

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

- Progress on the Selective Licensing schemes and data on the number of evictions as a result of the introduction of these schemes;
- Manchester Move, the name given to the single point of access and a common application process for social housing in Manchester;
- Housing vulnerable people in B&Bs and how B&Bs are inspected;
- Tackling rogue landlords, and the Rental Charter;
- Social Housing and new builds across the city; and
- Northwards ALMO (arms-length management organisation).

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

- Welcoming the positive impact Selective Licensing was having in those areas;
- Welcoming the figures that had shown that evictions had not increased as a result of the introduction of Selective Licensing schemes;

- Support for rolling out the Selective Licensing schemes and the Rogue Landlord Team to other areas of the city to address rogue landlords and poor property management and requested an analysis of the impact of these schemes;
- Consideration needed to be given to the duty of rehousing for repeat perpetrators of anti-social behaviour;
- Why was the reported number of formal action taken against landlords low;
- What were the minimum standard that Bed and Breakfasts had to adhere to, how often are they inspected and were there many complaints from tenants of these;
- Following the regeneration of the Ben Street area of Clayton concern was raised over the reported lack of social housing being offered as part of this scheme;
- Welcoming the partnership approach to delivering Social Housing and New Builds across the City; and
- Would Section 106 funding secured from the developments within the city centre be ring fenced to fund affordable housing in the city centre.

The Strategic Lead Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety said that Bed and Breakfasts that meet the requirements for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing (i.e. 3 or more stories, with 5 or more households sharing amenities such as kitchen and bathroom facilities) are included in the Housing Compliance and Enforcement team's HMO Licensing programme. They are granted a licence for a maximum of 2 years. An inspection takes place on receipt of an application with a further planned inspection to check compliance with the licence. A further unannounced inspection is carried out each year. They are subject to HMO standards. She said these are available on the Council's website and would be circulated to Members for information. She agreed to circulate the numbers of inspections undertaken and informed Members that the number of complaints received from residents of B&Bs was very low which is why the additional unannounced inspection takes place.

With regard to the number of prosecutions of rogue landlords she said that formal enforcement would take place and further information on the figures reported in section 4.3 of the report would be provided to Members. She further confirmed that the Rogue Landlord Team operate city wide.

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration informed the Committee that a review of the allocations policy would be undertaken and consideration would be given to the issues of rehousing perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and the number of bedrooms a family needed would inform part of this review. She agreed that further information would be provided to the Committee on this activity at an appropriate time. The Head of Housing advised that applicants seeking housing could update their circumstances using the on line system.

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration said that she welcomed the comments regarding the positive impact that selective licensing was having in those areas, and whilst mindful of budgetary restraints consideration would be given to rolling this out into other areas of the city, she said Manchester would also make a submission to the national consultation on selective licensing. In response to the specific question regarding the Ben Street regeneration area she advised that she would discuss this with the Member outside of the meeting. In response to the discussion regarding Section 21 evictions in the private rented sector she said that

this was being looked at in consultation with the Manchester Renters Forum. She further commented that she supported the campaign launched by Shelter to support tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit access the private rented sector.

The Director of Housing and Residential Growth said that he welcomed the positive contribution that selective licensing was having in those areas of the city where it was implemented. He reported that an application for funding specifically to invest in affordable and social housing would be made to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and he commented on the positive commitment, in partnership with local providers working in Manchester to deliver such housing across the city, including the use of contributions for Section 106 monies to deliver affordable housing schemes in the city centre area.

## **Decisions**

The Committee:-

1. Welcomes the Executive Members working in collaboration and across portfolios to address the issue of housing in Manchester;
2. Recognise the proactive action taken to support the most vulnerable residents in the city;
3. Support the review of the Allocations System and request that Members are involved in the review;
4. Recommends that a report on Manchester Move be submitted to the Committee for consideration at an appropriate time;
5. Request that Officers circulate the HMO standards to Members;
6. Welcome the commitment given to delivering more social and affordable housing;
7. Recommends that planning applications needed to consider the housing needs of the local population.

## **NESC/18/37            Update on the work to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping and the Manchester Homeless Strategy**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Lead for Homelessness that provided an update on the work that was taking place to tackle homelessness and people sleeping rough sleeping in the City.

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

- the impact on Manchester of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017;
- Information on the work to tackle people who are sleeping rough;
- the impact of the Cold Weather Provision;

- the new draft Strategy for Homelessness for the City of Manchester that was currently under discussion and would be signed off by the Homeless Partnership in September, for launching on the 10 October, World Homeless Day; and
- The Council's wider action plan for homelessness that would sit below the Strategy.

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

- The appropriateness of placing families in temporary accommodation that extended for periods of up to two years and the impact that this had on children's education and a families wider support network;
- Whilst recognising the success of the Longford Centre what provision was there for homeless people with complex mental health and / or substance misuse issues;
- A City Centre ward Member commented on the excellent work undertaken by the Council's outreach workers with people sleeping rough and the partnership approach to address this issue;
- What were the true numbers of people sleeping rough and how many were there outside of the city centre;
- Members commented on the generous nature of Mancunians who gave money to people sleeping rough but questioned if this was enabling people to remain living on the streets and not helping alleviate the problem;
- There was a clear distinction between street begging and people sleeping rough;
- The impact of austerity and welfare reform on the levels of homelessness;
- Domestic Violence was absent from the Manchester Homelessness Strategy;
- How long were homeless people in B&B accommodation and concern was expressed regarding the condition of these properties;
- How effective was the triage service provided to people who presented as homeless as there was anecdotal evidence of inappropriate service and solutions offered to families, often out of area; and
- Were there any other places that people could present and be assessed rather than having to attend the Town Hall and wait for often long periods of time to be seen and assessed.

Councillor Karney, Member for Harpuhey ward addressed the Committee and said that his ward and the neighbouring ward of Moston were proud to offer support to homeless people but were disappointed to note that both wards had been identified within the report. He further called for additional resources for the wards to help support these residents who are housed in the area. The Deputy Leader apologised to the Member and commented that dispersed accommodation was provided across the city. She said that discussions were ongoing with Housing Providers to look at options for the management of these properties and offer floating support to tenants. She said that work was also ongoing at a Greater Manchester level to resolve this issue. She further commented that the demands of the Homelessness Reduction Act had to be delivered within existing financial resources.

The Deputy Leader acknowledged the concerns raised by the Members about their constituents and said she was aware of the impact of placing families with children away from their local community. She said that a response to the individual case highlighted by the Member would be provided. She advised that she would be seeking to address the issues raised around travel and emergency funds with colleagues in Children's Services and the Benefits Unit.

The Deputy Leader reported that domestic violence services and support were commissioned through Adult Services and a report on this issue would be considered at the meeting of Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee on 6 September 2018. She assured the Committee that this issue was taken very seriously and that the Homelessness Strategy would be updated before it was presented to the Homeless Partnership.

The Deputy Leader said that the Cold Weather provision had been a success last year and had provided a bed for everyone who was homeless when the temperature fell below zero. She said that they were seeking to extend this emergency provision in the coming year.

The Strategic Lead for Homelessness said that the Homeless Charter Group did review the 'front door' service that was provided for people who present as homeless, currently 80 – 90 per day. She said that in addition to the Town Hall reception young people could attend Centre Point for an assessment and The Riverside Group provided assessments for refugees. She also informed the Committee that they were looking at options to undertake assessments at Etrop Court and that Woodward Court provided accommodation for homeless people with complex needs. She commented that opportunities for delivering assessments in other locations such as day centres, hospitals and the prison are being explored. In response to a question regarding workers case loads she informed the Committee that this was currently at 45 cases. She advised that the automated bidding system would bid for homes on a person's behalf if they were unable to do so themselves, or if they were bidding inappropriately.

The Strategic Lead for Homelessness said that Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust are seeking to increase the number of mental health outreach workers to engage with people sleeping rough. She said that this was an example of partners across the city, both statutory and voluntary working together to respond to the issue of homelessness. She informed the Committee that £0.5m funding had been secured to coproduce rough sleeping initiatives to tackle people sleeping rough. In response to the question regarding numbers of people sleeping rough she advised that the most recent count had identified 127 people sleeping rough in the city centre. The figures for outside of the city centre would be circulated to Members.

The Strategic Lead for Homelessness responded to the comments raised regarding out of area placements. She said that they always tried to avoid this and it was often due to the lack of accommodation available locally. She asked Members to inform the homelessness team of any private landlords that they were aware of in their wards who would be willing to accommodate homeless people and families. She said that the use of B&Bs was regulated by national guidance and the average stay was currently 14 days.

The Strategic Lead for Homelessness responded to a request for further information on Social Impact Bonds by saying that this was a Greater Manchester project and additional information would be circulated to Members.

The Deputy Leader said that begging was a significant issue in the city centre and in other areas. She said Mancunians were very generous however giving money to homeless peoples was counter productive. She said people should be encouraged to give money to the Big Change Fund as this had demonstrated that people could be supported to move into accommodation and off the streets. She said a campaign would be launched before Christmas to raise public awareness.

## **Decisions**

The Committee welcomes the positive response by the Council and partners to the complex issue of homelessness and to help vulnerable people in the city.

[Councillor Azra Ali declared a personal and non prejudicial interest as an employee of CGL Manchester]

## **NESC/18/38            Proposals for a Resident Parking Policy**

The Committee considered the report of the Operational Director of Highways that invited the Members to consider a new resident parking policy for Manchester. The policy, once approved, would enable the council to move forward in designing, costing and ultimately implementing a sustainable model for residents' parking schemes across the city.

The report informed Members that it would be necessary to come back to a future meeting with detailed proposals including costs, how schemes would be funded and a proposed charging regime once further work on testing existing and potential new schemes against the policy principles had been undertaken.

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

- A background to resident's parking schemes since the introduction of these in the city almost 20 years ago;
- Proposed Principles for Resident Parking Schemes;
- Where schemes should be considered;
- Financial consequences and the need for a clear plan for meeting revenue costs;
- Visitor, carer's and business permits and Blue Badge holders; and
- Information on the proposal to review existing schemes.

The Committee heard from a resident of St Georges, Hulme who had been invited to address the Members to describe the experience of local residents. He informed the Committee:-

- Residents experienced inconsiderate parking on their streets by people who use the streets as a car park;
- Of daily incidents of cars being parked over dropped kerbs, parking on pavements and on double yellow lines;
- Pedestrians were unable to use the pavements as a result of this inconsiderate parking,
- It was not safe for wheel chair users and residents with a disability to use the pavements;
- Bin collection and road sweepers had difficulty accessing the area due to the parking of cars, this had an impact on the cleanliness of the area;
- Concerns had been expressed that in the event of a tragedy, emergency vehicles would be unable to access the area;
- Section 106 funding from local building developments should be used to fund a local resident parking scheme; and
- Residents of St Georges were calling for parity as other resident parking schemes existed in the Hulme area.

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

- Acknowledging that the increase in car use and related parking issues was as a result of the success of the city;
- Acknowledging that more schemes are desperately needed to tackle the blight of commuter parking particularly, but not exclusively in the area surrounding the city centre;
- Acknowledging the financial pressures that new schemes will add to already existing revenue costs;
- Discussions with local residents had highlighted that residents would not be willing to pay for schemes that already existed and had stated that these schemes should remain as they were. There were, however, areas highlighted where residents would be prepared to contribute towards the costs of a scheme;
- Acknowledging the principle of tightening availability of residents visitor permits as they may be subject to abuse, but recognise the reality that residents are visited by multiple friends and visitors;
- Local business such as the Universities, Hospitals and the Etihad Stadium, that were seen to impact on residents parking as a result of their expansion should contribute and pay for residents parking schemes;
- Consideration to Park and Ride schemes should be given at locations across the city;
- Reconsideration should be given to introducing a Congestion Charge in the city, commenting that in addition to parking issues it would further address air pollution and improve traffic management across the city; and
- More needed to be done to improve access as well as encourage and invest on more sustainable forms of public transport across the city which would reduce the reliance on the car as the primary source of transport for people.

The Executive Member for the Environment, Planning and Transport said that she welcomed and acknowledged the views of the Committee and that she did care about the views expressed by residents. She said that these would be relayed to the

meeting of the Executive who would be considering this report at their meeting of 12 September.

## **Decisions**

The Committee proposed the following recommendations for consideration by the Executive:-

1. That Section 106 and Council resources should be used to immediately fund the four schemes identified within the report. (Rusholme, North Manchester General Hospital, Hathersage Road Area and St George's).
2. That all of the current existing resident parking schemes are to remain the same.
3. There should be no cost to residents benefiting from resident parking schemes. Contributions to meet revenue costs for schemes should be sought by the organisation/development causing parking problems e.g. airport, hospitals, stadiums, universities in the first instance. That there should be better balance between controlling abuse of visitor permits and flexibility for more than one visitor per household.
4. Revenue costs and administration costs of those existing schemes should be reviewed and where possible reduced.
5. The Executive to consider and bring forward proposals for implementation of resident parking schemes that were not explicitly referenced within the report should be brought forward and implemented.

## **NESC/18/39            Overview Report**

The report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which contained key decisions within the Committee's remit and responses to previous recommendations was submitted for comment. Members were also invited to agree the Committee's future work programme.

## **Decisions**

The Committee notes the report and approves the work programme.

## **Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 6 September 2018**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Russell (Chair) – in the Chair  
Councillors Ahmed Ali, Andrews, Barrett, Clay, Davies, Lanchbury, Kilpatrick, R Moore, B Priest, A Simcock, Watson and S Wheeler

#### **Also present:**

Councillor N Murphy - Deputy Leader  
Councillor Ollerhead - Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

**Apologies:** Councillor Rowles

#### **RGSC/18/44 Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2018.

#### **RGSC/18/45 Revenue and Benefits Unit - Annual Report 2018/18**

The Committee considered a report of the City Treasurer, which provided Members with an overview of the performance of the Council's Council Tax, Benefits and Business Rates service areas for the 2017/18 financial year. The report also provided an update on key areas of work and the welfare reform changes.

The Director of Customer Services and Transactions referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:-

- Performance in the collection of Council Tax, which included details on Council Tax support, collection of arrears, recover activity and action, enforcement agent activity, attachment of earnings orders, attachments to benefits and Increasing revenue from the New Homes Bonus;
- Performance in Benefit administration, which included details on Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance;
- Performance in the collection of Business Rates, which included details on increasing revenue from business rates and Business Rates relief awarded;
- Details of Discretionary Housing Payment spend against planned budget, including a breakdown of awards by tenure type;
- Details of Discretionary Council Tax Payment Scheme;
- Performance of the Council's Welfare Provision Scheme;
- Details on the welfare reform agenda and Housing Benefit administration; and
- Other achievements and activity during 2017/18, including extension of support to care leavers, changes to the Council Tax Long Term Empty Premium, fraud and error initiatives and the transition to Universal Credit

Some of the key points that arose from the Committees discussions were:-

- The collection rate for Council Tax was impressive and would it be possible to improve on this in future years;
- How effective was the Council in learning from the success of other local authorities;
- How much was spent on chasing council tax payment from university students who had not submitted exemption forms and was there anything further that could be done to streamline this process;
- Clarification was sought as to when the Council would use bailiffs in pursuing outstanding debt owed with reference to a particular instance given;
- Did the Council have any contingency in place should all Discretionary Housing Payment funding be utilised and was there any correlation with the number of people moving into Manchester and an increase in benefit claims being made;
- What was the Council doing to identify empty homes that could be brought back into use and therefore become subject to Council Tax payment
- When did new build properties become subject to Council Tax payments;
- Did the Council have any influence in the banding of properties within the city
- Was it possible to have a breakdown of the different bandings for new build properties that had recently been built;
- How many cases of bankruptcy had there been during 2017/18;
- Was there any update on the proposed changes to Housing Benefit in relation to supported housing; and
- How was the funding framework for temporary accommodation working in practice

The Director of Customer Services and Transactions advised that improvement targets were set each year and the Council aimed to collect more council tax year on year. To achieve this the Council put in place a variety of methods, including affordable payment plans for those residents who were struggling to make payments. The approach adopted by the Council was one of proportionality based on what people could afford for those who were in financial difficulties. In terms of the Council's effectiveness compared to other local authorities, it was reported that this was not possible to compare, as local authorities had adopted different schemes.

The Committee was advised that the Council had a good relationship with the Universities and the Council used a database of registration to identify students as required to confirm eligibility to the Council Tax discount and exemption. A cost had never been attributed to chasing council tax payments from students who had failed to submit exemption forms and the Council worked closely with the Universities in issuing communications to students to try and ensure that this did not frequently occur.

In terms of the use of enforcement agents (formally referred to as Bailiffs) the Director of Customer Services and Transactions advised that the Council had taken a more informed approach to the use of enforcement agents and would not send accounts that are not deemed suitable for collection to enforcement agents. For example, where possible, recovery from earnings or benefits were set up as the preferred recovery route, even if this took some time to clear the debt. In relation to

the case referred to by the Committee, the Director of Customer Services and Transactions explained the background to the particular instance and the subsequent steps taken.

The Committee was advised that Government provided a grant amount for Discretionary Housing Payments up to an agreed threshold and any money not spent had to be returned. The Council was able to fund above this amount up to a further threshold but this was funded from the Council's budget and although demand was tailing off, as part of the budget setting process for 2017/18 an additional £1 million had been invested by the Council.

In relation to identifying empty properties that could be brought back into use and new properties being made subject to council tax, it was explained that the Council undertook a variety of activities to try and identify empty properties, which included officers going out into communities across the city. As for new properties, there was a process that involved the Valuation Office setting the council tax band upon receipt of completion notices submitted by the Council. When these properties were ready to be occupied they were placed on a temporary band until the valuation Office had made a determination and then the council tax charge was subsequently backdated. Officers confirmed that the Council had no influence in the banding of properties in and across the city.

Officer advised that they would look at what information could be obtained and provided to Members around the banding of new properties across the city. It was also reported that the Council had only dealt with a small number of bankruptcy cases in the last year and it was only a measure used on very rare occasions.

The Committee was advised that following the consultation by the DWP and DCLG in January 2018 on the proposed changes to Housing Benefit in relation to supported housing it was reported that notification had been received that government would not be proceeding with the previously proposed changes.

In terms of the funding framework for temporary accommodation it was reported that when the funding was provided from government, it was based on a snapshot in time with some forecasted growth. Unfortunately following the snapshot the demand in Manchester had risen by a higher amount than assumed by government and Manchester had a funding shortfall as a result even though this was not government's documented policy intention. The amount received from government had not been enough. The Council had notified the government of this, who had responded to advise that they could not review the awards to date but that this would be looked at in the future. To date there had been no funding received. To address the shortfall, the Council had been using its Discretionary Housing Payment funding and additional money set aside by the Council.

## **Decision**

The Committee

- (1) Welcomes the update on the performance of the Council's Council Tax, Benefits and Business Rates service areas for the 2017/18 financial year;

- (2) Requests that Officer provide the Committee with more appropriate information on the banding of new properties being built in and across the city;
- (3) Agrees that the Chair of the Committee and the Executive Member for Finance And Human Resource write to the government expressing the Council's concern in the lack of necessary funding to address the increasing demand in temporary accommodation

### **RGSC/18/46 Proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/2020**

The Committee considered a report of the City Treasurer which set out proposed changes to the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme to enable the scheme to remain fit for purpose as working age residents in receipt of welfare benefits were moved onto Universal Credit. The report also sought approval to formally consult on the proposals.

The Director of Customer Services and Transactions referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:-

- The background to the current scheme, following the localisation of Council Tax Support;
- Details of Manchester's current scheme, which was based on the default provisions offered by the government in 2012 and where possible used the DWP assessment of income and needs, minimising the need for further means-testing by the local authority;
- The impact of Universal Credit in Manchester and its impact on Council Tax Support;
- Issues with aligning the scheme with Universal Credit and proposals to mitigate and respond to these issues;
- Proposed changes to the scheme which would come into effect from 1 April 2019 in respect of people entitled to Universal Credit;
- The cost of making the proposed changes to the scheme;
- Details of financial modelling and impacts of a banded scheme; and
- A proposal to go out to consultation on the proposed changes between 13 September and 31 October 2018, with the responses along with the final proposals brought back to Scrutiny Committee before approval by the Executive in December 2018.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committees discussions were:-

- There was support in relation to the proposed changes to the scheme to enable it to remain fit for purpose as working age residents in receipt of welfare benefits were moved onto Universal Credit;
- Strong Concern was raised by Members that the scheme still supported historic changes that had been made to the scheme in 2017 to take into account the Government's welfare reform changes that affected all other means tested benefits. Specifically this was in relation to where the Council had agreed to exclude additional applicable amounts in council tax support to families where a third or subsequent child was born or joined a household on or after 1 April 2017, which aligned to the Housing Benefit rules.

- Clarification was sought as to when the above rule in relation to council tax support applied from;
- Was it possible to estimate the cost to the Council if the rule to exclude additional applicable amounts in council tax support to families with a third or subsequent child was not in place; and
- Would it be possible for the Council to reconsider its stance on this part of the scheme as part of the proposed consultation.

The Director of Customer Services and Transactions advised that the decision to enforce the provisions set out in regulations to exclude additional applicable amounts in the Council Tax Support Scheme to families with a third or subsequent child was agreed by the Executive in 2017 and there were currently no proposals to look to change this provision. The only changes proposed to the scheme that the Executive were being asked to consider were in relation to working age residents in receipt of welfare benefits who were being moved onto Universal Credit.

It was confirmed that the provision to exclude additional applicable amounts in the scheme to families with a third or subsequent child only applied to families with two or more children who had applied for support from 1 April 2017.

In terms of cost to the Council, the Director of Customer Services and Transactions advised that the provision had impacted in the region of 633 families in Manchester and had resulted in savings to the Council of approximately £2000

The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources acknowledged the concerns that had been raised by the Committee around the capping of the payment of council tax support to families with two or more children. He clarified that the proposed changes to the scheme that were before the Committee today were in relation to working age residents in receipt of welfare benefits who were being moved onto Universal Credit, however, he advised that the provision of council tax support payments to households with two or more children could be looked at again by the Executive if the Committee felt strongly enough about this to put forward an appropriate recommendation to the Executive.

## **Decision**

The Committee:-

- (1) supports the proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme in relation to working age residents in receipt of welfare benefits who were being moved onto Universal Credit.
- (2) requests, as a matter of urgency, that the Executive re-consider the current part of the scheme to exclude additional applicable amounts in the Council Tax Support Scheme to families with a third or subsequent child; and
- (3) requests that Officers submit a further report to the Committee, following the consultation period, with final proposals to the scheme prior to the Executive making its final decision.

## **RGSC/18/47 Blacklisting**

The Committee considered a report of the City Treasurer on the Council's position and actions in relation to organisations/contractors that had previously or were currently blacklisting trade union members and officers.

The City Treasurer referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:-

- The Council's position as set out in its Ethical Procurement Policy in relation to undertaking business with suppliers, service providers and contractors that unlawfully compiled, used, supplied or sold information that contained details of persons who were or has been members of trade unions or persons who were taking part or had taken part in the activities of trade unions;
- The actions that the Council could take in relation to organisations/contractors that had previously or were currently blacklisting trade union members or officers, which could include exclusion of an economic operator from a procurement process in accordance with the public procurement rules;
- Any exclusion must be considered on a case-by-case basis as a blanket ban would not be lawful;
- Exclusion needed to be justified on appropriate evidence and was not to be seen as a means of punishing operators for past wrongdoing, but rather a means of putting right past wrongdoing and ensuring that it did not re-occur;
- The concept of self-cleaning, which provided that an operator convicted of an offence would not be precluded from participating in a procurement process if it could demonstrate that it had put in place effective measures to remedy the consequences of any criminal offences or misconduct and ensure that the conduct would not recur; and
- There was no automatic right to terminate a contract where an economic operator has been or was engaged in blacklisting

Some of the key points that arose from the Committees discussions were:-

- It was suggested that the Ethical Procurement Sub Group may want to add a report to its work plan to look at whether the Council's Ethical Procurement policy had appropriate Trade Union/whistleblowing recognition within in it or whether this was an area that requires strengthening;
- How could the Committee be satisfied that the companies who had submitted bids for the Town Hall Management Contract had undertaken appropriate self-cleaning measures;
- Who would be responsible for making the final decision on whether the self-cleaning evidence submitted by the companies who had submitted bids for the Town Hall Management Contract was sufficient;
- There appeared to be a contradiction within the self cleaning regime in so much as an operator could be excluded from a procurement process on evidence of an admission of wrong doing, but the concept of self-cleaning required potential suppliers to explain how it had breached the grounds for exclusion and what action they had taken to remedy; and
- The report was lacking in terms of what action the Council had taken in relation to any organisation it had previously contracted or were currently contracting

that had or were blacklisting trade union members and officers and examples of action taken were requested.

The Executive Members for Finance and Human Resources advised that the Council's Ethical Procurement Policy already contained appropriate Trade Union/whistleblowing recognition but if Members felt that this was something that the Sub Group should look at in more detail then this would be welcomed.

The Committee was advised that in terms of the Town Hall procurement process, statements of self-cleaning had been submitted from the two organisations who were bidding for the contract. The Council could also request further evidence of self-cleaning if it was not satisfied with what had already been provided. A view from the City Solicitor would need to be sought as to whether it would be appropriate to share all or part of this information with the Committee at the current stage in the procurement process.

The City Treasurer advised that the final decision on whether the self-cleaning evidence submitted was sufficient would be taken by the appropriate senior officer, based on guidance formed from a variety of other officers from within procurement, finance and legal services.

Officers advised that the highlighted contradiction in the self-clean regime would be looked at and clarification would be provided to members of the Committee.

In terms of examples of actions that the Council had taken, Officers suggested that this could be reported to the Ethical Procurement Sub Group as part of the report on appropriate Trade Union/whistleblowing recognition it had suggested.

The City Solicitor commented that in relation to blacklisting, the Council need to act in a proportionate manner and assess the particular circumstances on a case by case basis as there were a number of procurement rule situations required to follow.

The Chair highlighted that there was a strong feeling by the Committee that the Ethical Procurement Sub Group should look at the issue of Trade Union relationships and Council contracts in greater detail and proposed that a report on this was added to the work programme for the sub group which could possibly include discussions with Trade Unionists.

The Executive Members for Finance and Human Resources reassured the Committee that the Council undertook regular dialogue with Trade Unions on many issues and that the concerns raised by Members would be taken into consideration.

## **Decision**

The Committee:-

- (1) Notes the report;
- (2) Agrees that a further report is referred to the Ethical Procurement Sub Group to look at whether the Council's Ethical Procurement policy has appropriate Trade

- Union/whistleblowing recognition within in it or whether this was an area that requires strengthening; and
- (3) Requests that the City Solicitor provides a view on whether there is a contradiction within the Council's self-cleaning regime as identified by the Committee.

### **RGSC/18/48 Our Town Hall Project - Management Contractor Procurement**

The Committee considered a report of the City Treasurer, which provided Members with an update on the procurement of a Management Contractor for the refurbishment and partial restoration of the Town Hall and Albert Square under the Our Town Hall (OTH) project.

The City Treasurer referred to the main points and themes in the report which included:-

- The procurement process was formally launched on 13 February 2018 with the issue of the Contract Notice via the Chest, accompanied by the full suite of procurement documents in line with the OJEU regulations;
- A total of six potential Management Contractors registered and downloaded the documents from the Chest, however only two organisations returned a Selection Questionnaire on 19 March 2018;
- Following evaluation of the Selection Questionnaires, Laing O'Rourke and Lend Lease were invited to submit Outline Solutions by 10 July 2008. These were evaluated prior to the issue of the Invitation to Continue Dialogue, on 6 August 2018
- This stage presented the Council with the opportunity to meet the bidders and provide feedback to bidders on their outline solution, and to enable the bidders to test their understanding of the Council's requirements;
- At all stages of the dialogue process, the objective was to enable the bidders to develop their best possible solution for the Council;
- A second week of dialogue meetings was planned for week commencing 10 September 2018 and would comprise of a series of detailed meetings and workshops, at which each bidder would present further details on their proposed solutions;
- It was intended to formally close the dialogue period on 21 September 2018, subject to having reached the point at which the Council was confident that the bidders had developed solutions that met the project requirements; and
- Final bids would be submitted in October followed by evaluation prior to the selection of the Preferred Bidder. The appointment of the management contractor was is scheduled for late November/early December 2018.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committees discussions were:-

- It was hoped that the successful appointed contractor would adopt and follow the Councils blacklisting policy;
- Clarification was sought as to whether the final decision in relation to accepting the evidence of self-cleansing as sufficient (submitted from the two bidders) had been made and if not, could this be considered by the Scrutiny Committee before the decision was taken and by who

- Could the Committee or the Ethical Procurement Sub Group be provided with the evidence of self-cleansing that had already been submitted by both bidders;
- Clarification was sought on the difference between refurbishment and partial restoration of the Town Hall;
- Could officers take account of the Committees previously expressed views in relation to blacklisting and self-cleaning, and ensure with greater vigour that appropriate evidence has been submitted before the appointment of a management contractor is made;
- A Member proposed that it would be appropriate for the Officer tasked with making the final decision on whether the self-cleansing evidence submitted by the two bidders was considered sufficient addressed a democratically accountable body of the Council to justify the decision before it was made; and
- Would the successfully appointed contractor be responsible for overseeing the construction works packages and if so would they be expected to adopt the appropriate Council policies and procedures.

The Deputy Leader commented that he acknowledged the concerns raised by Members in relation to self-cleansing and blacklisting and suggested if any Members had evidence that appropriate self-cleansing had not taken place that this should be reported.

It was explained that the parts of the Town Hall that held historic value would be restored back to their original state and in the main this related to the ground floor and level 1 of the Town hall. The higher floors did not hold as much historical value so it was intended that these would be refurbished to bring them into fit and proper use.

Officers confirmed that there were still opportunities to challenge the evidence of self-cleansing submitted to date from both bidders as no decision had been taken as to which of the bidders would be appointed. An assurance was given to the Committee that appropriate vigour had been and would continue to be applied throughout the remainder of the procurement process.

The City Treasurer commented that the Town Hall project was the most significant construction project the Council had embarked on and there were a number of serious considerations that needed to be taken into account to ensure the appropriate contractor was appointed. There was heavy importance on social value and ethical considerations but also financial viability and ability to deliver the final outcomes of the project. There were some pertinent points around the responsibility for the procurement of the packages of work that sat under the management contractor and the policy that was to be followed in procuring these. In addition, the City Treasurer advised that the final decision to appoint the management contractor would be a key decision taken by the Executive.

The City Solicitor advised that a legal view would need to be formed as to what information could be shared with Members at the current stage of the procurement process. The City Treasurer also advised that under procurement legislation there were a number of issues that needed to be taken into account that were evaluated by an officer evaluation panel and it would be this panel that would submit a recommendation that would form the key decision for the letting of the contract.

Officers advised that the successful bidder would be required to oversee the construction works packages and in doing so would be expected to adopt the appropriate Council policies and procurement procedures.

### **Decision**

The Committee:-

- (1) Notes the report; and
- (2) Agrees that as part of the report to be referred to the Ethical Procurement Sub Group on blacklisting, the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee is given discretion as to the level of detail that is contained within the report in relation to the appointment of the management contractor for the Town Hall, taking into account appropriate commercial considerations.

### **RGSC/18/49 Overview Report**

The Committee considered a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which contained key decisions within the Committee's remit and responses to previous recommendations was submitted for comment. Members were also invited to agree the Committee's future work programme.

A request was made for the possible inclusion of a report on the Committees Work programme on the Value form the Public Realm and the Council's expenditure on this.

The Chair also advised that she would be requesting a report for the next meeting on the overspend in the Children's Services budget.

### **Decision**

The Committee:-

- (1) Notes the report.
- (2) Notes that the Chair will discuss the above item with the Member who suggested it in more detail; and
- (3) Notes the report requested on the overspend in the Children's Services budget for Octobers meeting.