

Health Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2020

This Scrutiny meeting was conducted via Zoom, in accordance with the provisions of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Present:

Councillor Farrell – in the Chair
Councillors N. Ali, Clay, Curley, Holt, Mary Monaghan Newman and Wills

Apologies: Councillor Doswell and Hitchen

Also present:

Councillor Craig, Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Nick Gomm, Director of Corporate Affairs, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning
Katy Calvin Thomas, Acting Chief Executive, Manchester Local Care Organisation
Laura Foster, Director of Finance Manchester Local Care Organisation
Claire Yarwood, Chief Finance Officer, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning

HSC/20/40 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020 as a correct record.

HSC/20/41 COVID-19

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Public Health that described that in October the Committee had received the latest version of the Manchester 12 Point COVID-19 Action Plan. This report and accompanying presentation provided a brief update on some aspects of the Plan.

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

- What was the impact of Tier 3 in reducing rates of infection;
- Did Manchester hospitals still have capacity to deliver non covid related services;
- Every citizen needed to take personal responsibility to prevent infection by observing Public Health guidance;
- Supporting the continued work of the Manchester Care Homes Board;
- Continuing the Committee's support for increased local control of a Test and Trace service;
- Noting the introduction of mass testing in Liverpool, would this be introduced in Manchester;
- Recognising the need to support NHS staff;

- Recognising the importance for family contact for people living in care homes, particularly for those with dementia;

The Director of Public Health responded by stating that the impacts of any restrictions would not be realised for approximately 2-3 weeks later, and this would allow for comparisons to be made. He stated that it was important that all lessons learnt from interventions were understood to help inform and plan for future outbreaks. He supported the comment of the Member regarding personal responsibility for preventing the spread of COVID-19 and commented that the latest lockdown was an opportunity to reduce the rate of infection and strengthen the test and trace service.

In response to the question regarding hospital services, the Director of Public Health stated that sites were taking a pragmatic approach to the changing situation. He stated that currently Emergency Services continued to be provided. Katy Calvin Thomas, Acting Chief Executive, Manchester Local Care Organisation added that there were approximately 300 COVID cases across Manchester hospitals and this was being managed, with additional capacity being created in intensive care settings. She described that work continued with partners to safely discharge patients to release bed capacity in hospitals, with the support of the Manchester Care Homes Board. She stated that the ambition was to maintain all hospital services safely for as long as possible, adding this situation was constantly monitored using the lessons learnt from the first wave experienced in March.

In response to a specific question regarding the management of COVID cases on a general hospital ward, the Director of Public Health described the protocols that were in place to manage these. He further commented that the number of outbreaks in schools had been restricted to single cases or small clusters and he remained confident that schools were COVID secure.

The Acting Chief Executive, Manchester Local Care Organisation stated that NHS staff sickness was monitored to ensure staff were safe and a programme of staff testing had been developed.

The Executive Director of Adult Social Services acknowledged the importance of maintaining contact for people residing in care homes. She said that work was being developed to support this activity in a safe and responsible manner, such as sharing good practice and the use of pods to facilitate visits. She described that the provider sector was represented on Manchester Care Homes Board.

The Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing stated that the findings and outcomes of the pilot testing recently announced for Liverpool would be monitored to understand the logistics of such an approach, efficacy of the testing and the public response.

In concluding this item the Chair expressed his gratitude to all staff across all sectors who were working tirelessly to respond to the COVID pandemic and supporting the residents of Manchester.

Decisions

The Committee notes the report.

**HSC/20/42 Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and Strategy for
2021/22**

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that set out the impact of COVID19 and other pressures and changes on the Council's budget for the period 2021-2025. The report also set out the impact of COVID19 on the capital programme and the implications for the budget.

The main points and themes within the report included: -

- The Medium Term Financial Plan remained challenged by uncertainty, which included the outcome of the Spending Review and post 2021/22 the potential changes to how local government funding was distributed;
- Prior to COVID19 there was an underlying budget gap of c£20m for 2021/22 rising to c£80m by 2024/25;
- Dealing with the impact of COVID19 had resulted in major spending pressures, particularly in social care, but also across all Directorates;
- The forecasted budget shortfall relating to COVID19 pressures and the Budget Position 2021/22 to 2024/25;
- Initial proposals across all Directorates to start addressing the budget gap in advance of the Spending Review and Local Government Financial Settlement;
- The need to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment on the options put forward, particularly those that involve impacts on services for residents and reductions in the Council's workforce;
- Proposed consultation on budget options and timescales; and
- Next Steps.

Decision

The Committee notes the report.

HSC/20/43 Budget Options for 2021/22

The Committee considered a report of the Acting Chief Executive Manchester Local Care Organisation and Executive Director of Adult Social Services that detailed the service and financial planning and associated budget strategy work that was taking place for adult social care with partners across the health and care system.

It detailed the identified and proposed opportunities to make savings in 2021/22 aligned to the remit of the Health Scrutiny Committee, to support the City Council to achieve a balanced budget in 2021/22.

As Adult Social Care was both within the MHCC health and care pooled budget, works in partnership and is increasingly focused on integrating with community health services through the Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO); this report was

jointly presented to the Scrutiny Committee by the key partners of MHCC, the Council and MLCO, noting the areas that would be led by MLCO.

It was important to note that the health contribution to the pooled budget was currently unknown as the NHS had not published the financial regime for 2021/22 yet.

The Executive Director of Adult Social Services introduced the main points and themes within the report included: -

- Providing an overview of ASC Statutory Responsibilities - Services, Eligibility, Care and Support;
- Providing a context for the 2020/21 Budget ;
- Covid-19 Pandemic and the ASC Improvement Programme - Context and Impact on Adult Social Care;
- Planning to Support Council Budget 2021/22 Onwards;
- Adult Social Care – Scope for Change and Supporting the Budget Challenge
- Financial Planning Assumptions and Approach;
- Improving Pathways and Focusing Support for Independence
- MLCO Transformation Programmes Update
- Health and Social Care System
- Population Health

The Committee was invited to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Executive on 11 November 2020.

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

- Noting the importance of protecting services to support the most vulnerable residents in the city;
- Noting that cuts had been imposed upon the city by the government since 2010 and demands on services had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and it was therefore incumbent upon the government to adequately fund all local authorities and the NHS;
- No cuts to services should be considered without a full analysis undertaken to understand the future impacts of these, noting the preference to the invest to save model of commissioning and designing services;
- Recognising the importance of preventative services and initiatives to improve population health; and
- Recognising the need to protect mental health services, noting that the need for these services had increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and would continue both in the short and long term.

The Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing stated that despite the imposition of austerity, Manchester had strived to protect services and support residents and staff working across services. She described that at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic the government had informed local authorities to spend what they needed to protect residents and the money would be reimbursed. She continued by stating that since that announcement the funding had not been

forthcoming and if the government failed to fund local authorities adequately and appropriately, taking into account inflationary pressures, Manchester potentially would only be able to deliver statutory duties as prescribed in the Care Act 2014. She stated that the current Council budget planning assumptions were that without further financial support from government there would be a minimum £20m reduction from the Council to the Health and Social Care Pooled Fund and therefore a consequential savings requirement.

The Executive Director of Adult Social Services stated that the preferred option would be to change the way services were delivered rather than cuts to services and staff to deliver the required savings. She stated that the challenge of this could not be underestimated, particularly when considered during a global pandemic.

Katy Calvin Thomas, Acting Chief Executive, Manchester Local Care Organisation stated that the integration of Health and Social Care and pooled budgets in Manchester had laid sound foundations to respond and plan to the emerging financial situation. She stated this model of working allowed for a joint system wide approach to create support services designed around people and by extension be more efficient.

The Chair stated that the financial challenges were severe and if the £20m could not be found, more difficult service reductions across preventative areas would need to be developed and in such circumstances, further detailed proposals would be developed for Health Scrutiny Committee to consider in the new year.

The Chair further commented that a report on Mental Health Service and the response to COVID-19 would be requested for the next meeting of the Committee.

Decision

The Committee endorse the recommendation that the Executive consider the officer cuts and savings options, taking into account the feedback from this scrutiny committee as described above.

HSC/20/44 Winter Planning - Adult Social Care and the Local Care Organisation

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Services, Manchester City Council and Mark Edwards, Chief Operating Officer, MLCO that report that provided Members with an update to the Manchester Local Care Organisation's (MLCO) response to winter and COVID-19 through the development of integrated planning across Health and Social Care.

The points and themes within the report included: -

- Providing a background and context for the report;
- Details and scope of the MLCO winter planning – including Identification of leadership around the “Preparing for Winter Challenge Report”; Lessons learned

during Covid-19 first wave pandemic, Activities to support demand management and Activities to support capacity management;

- Adult Social Care Winter Planning and identified actions;
- Describing the activities to support the care market, noting the four workstreams identified by The Strategic Care Homes Board;
- Describing that the MLCO had developed its winter plan across the key domains; and
- Immediate next steps.

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

- Would the recruitment of nurses to staff the NHS Nightingale North West impact on nurse capacity at other hospital sites;
- Was there enough flu vaccine in Manchester;
- Was the 36 beds identified at NHS Nightingale North West for Manchester and Trafford residents enough to meet demand; and
- Further clarification on where the two 20 bed 'discharge to assess' facilities were to be located.

The Executive Director of Adult Social Services informed the Committee the two 20 bed 'discharge to assess' facilities had not yet been procured and further information would be shared with the Members when this was available. In response to the question relating to the flu vaccination she described that Manchester's Flu Programme for 2020/21 had been reported to the October meeting and progress against this was monitored and reported. She further stated that there was no anticipated issues relating to the provision of PPE (Personal protective equipment)

The Chief Operating Officer, MLCO stated that the allocation of 36 bed spaces for Manchester and Trafford residents at the NHS Nightingale North West were governed and managed through the Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust. He described that capacity would continue to be monitored to ensure the facility remained safe and effective. He further stated that staffing of the site was managed through existing resources and local arrangements.

In concluding this item the Chair expressed his gratitude to all staff across all sectors who were working tirelessly to respond to the COVID pandemic and supporting the residents of Manchester.

Decision

To note the report.

HSC/20/45 Overview Report

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.

The Chair noted that a report on Mental Health Services and the response to COVID-19 would be requested for the December meeting.

The Chair advised the Members that he had received a written question from Macc that related to the impact of budget cuts on the VCSE Sector. He stated that the question would be referred to the Chair of the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee and the relevant Executive Member for consideration.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme, subject to the above comments.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2020

This Scrutiny meeting was conducted via Zoom, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Present:

Councillor Stone – in the Chair
Councillors Abdullatif, Sameem Ali, Alijah, Cooley, Hewitson, T Judge, Kilpatrick, Lovecy, Madeleine Monaghan, Reeves, Reid and Wilson

Co-opted Voting Members:

Ms S Barnwell, Parent Governor Representative
Ms Z Derraz, Parent Governor Representative

Co-opted Non Voting Members:

Mr L Duffy, Secondary Sector Teacher Representative
Ms J Fleet, Primary Sector Teacher Representative

Also present:

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children and Schools

Apologies:

Councillors McHale and Sadler

CYP/20/41 Committee Changes

The Chair welcomed Councillor Abdullatif who had recently joined the Committee. He informed Members that Councillor Sadler had asked to be removed from the membership of the Committee due to family commitments. He thanked Councillor Sadler for her contribution to the Committee over the years and sent the Committee's best wishes to her family.

CYP/20/42 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2020.

CYP/20/43 Update on Opening of Schools for All Children and Young People

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education which provided a further update on the full reopening of schools for all pupils in the Autumn term with a specific focus on school attendance. The report also noted that, through the learning and education system, children were informed about and understood environmental issues and the negative impact of carbon; promoting safe and healthy lives.

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

- Attendance;
- School closures;
- Virtual School;
- Elective Home Education (EHE); and
- Exclusions.

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

- Sport for children during lockdown, including swimming and sports activity outside of school;
- To commend the work of the Director of Customer Services and Transaction and her team in setting up a system to provide payments for families entitled to Free School Meals;
- Highlighting that the National Education Union (NEU) was calling for schools to be closed during the lockdown;
- Actions being taken to provide children with laptops or other devices and internet access;
- What had been the outcome from the Outbreak meetings referred to in the report;
- What could be done to reassure parents that it was safe for their children to return to school; and
- Where parents chose to home educate, ensuring that the child was provided with a suitable education and that parents understood that the child would be taken off the school roll.

The Director of Education informed the Committee that her service was working with schools to identify the best solution for providing devices and internet access to children. She advised Members that allocation of laptops to schools by the Department for Education (DfE) was now based on the number of pupils being required to self-isolate.

The Director of Education reported that the Council had arranged for Quality Assurance professionals to visit all Manchester schools to get an understanding of the remote learning offer across the city and what help schools might need. She suggested that, once this had been completed, the Committee might want to consider a report on this. Members welcomed this suggestion. A Member requested that this include a particular focus on Years 11 and 13 as these pupils were due to take important examinations in the summer of 2021. The Member also requested that, where schools were streaming lessons, data be included on how many pupils had the equipment to access these lessons. The Executive Member for Children and Schools expressed concern that Manchester children would be expected to take examinations at the same time as and be compared against pupils from other parts of the country where levels of COVID-19 were lower and pupils had missed less school due to self-isolation.

The Director of Education advised that she would check what sports activities children were able to access during lockdown and share this information with

Members.

The Director of Education explained how multi-agency Outbreak meetings took place when an unexplained cluster of COVID-19 cases occurred in a school to ascertain why this had happened and to identify what could be put in place to prevent it from happening again. Examples included staff or children from different bubbles coming into contact at break time or staff car-sharing. She advised Members that this information was being shared with schools and they were being asked to consider this in their risk assessments.

The Director of Education reported that the Council had undertaken spot checks of 10% of school risk assessments and that the Health and Safety Executive was also checking how schools were managing the situation. She advised that all the feedback was that Manchester schools were managing this well and evidence showed that infection was largely coming from the community rather than being spread in schools. She drew Members' attention to the Attendance Helpline which parents were able to ring to speak to someone who was not from the school who had access to school risk assessments and could give them reassurance about the measures that had been put in place.

The Head of School Quality Assurance and Strategic SEND advised that 118 new applications for EHE had been received since September 2020, which was 50 more than for the same time last year. She stated that 74 had so far been assessed and judged as either suitable or unsuitable, 70 of which had been completed within 20 days. She reported that the current policy was that once parents had requested to home educate and that education had been deemed to be suitable, the child would be removed from the school roll. She informed Members that parents were asked for the reason that they had decided to home educate and, while some had cited anxiety about the spread of COVID-19 in schools as a reason, others stated that they had enjoyed having more time with their children during the first lockdown. She also cited some of the work schools, particularly special schools, had done to address parental anxiety, such as arranging a bespoke package with a limited timetable.

Decisions

1. To request a report on remote learning, to include a particular focus on Years 11 and 13 and information on the numbers of pupils who are able to access any streamed lessons or online learning that is being made available.
2. To note that the Director of Education will provide information to Members on sports activity available to children during lockdown.
3. To recognise the contribution of staff, parents and pupils in the re-opening of schools, to acknowledge the challenges they are facing and to ask the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services and the Director of Education to pass on the Committee's thanks.

CYP/20/44 Children and Young People's Plan 2020 - 2024

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which presented the refreshed Children and Young People's Plan 2020 – 2024. It provided an overview of the process that was undertaken in collaboration with children and young people in Manchester and members of the Children's Board. It highlighted how the final product was aligned to other strategic plans and identified sharper and more ambitious, key priorities, ways of working and measures of success.

The report noted that one of the key priorities for the Children and Young People's Plan was for children and young people to be able to live in a society where environmental issues were intrinsic to decision making. It stated that key outcomes, including the reduction in hospital admissions for young people with asthma, could only be achieved if the plan had a specific focus on what could be done to improve the environment in which children and young people lived.

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

- The background to the plan;
- The process for developing the plan, including the involvement of children and young people;
- Next steps; and
- The plan on a page, which was appended to the report.

Members recognised the contributions of young people to this plan and welcomed the inclusion of the plan on a page, which summarised this work.

The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services suggested that the Committee receive an annual report on the progress of this work, to which the Chair agreed.

In response to a Member's question on whether the impact of race and ethnicity could be more explicitly reflected in the metrics, the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services advised that data could be broken down by ethnicity and that, where ethnicity played a significant role, this could be highlighted in the update report.

Decisions

1. To receive an annual report on the progress of this work.
2. That Members will provide continued support to promote the plan throughout their civic duties to the wider Council and its partnerships, thus promoting a safe, happy, healthy and successful future for Manchester's children and young people.
3. To thank everyone who had been involved in this work and to ask the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services to pass on the Committee's thanks.

CYP/20/45 Learning and Impact from the Quality Assurance Framework

The Committee received a presentation of the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding which provided an overview of the learning and impact from the Quality Assurance Framework.

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

- Background to the Quality Assurance Framework;
- Key findings and data from the past 12 months;
- The impact of this work;
- The strengths and areas for continued focus identified through the Framework; and
- Next steps.

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

- Whether the pandemic had had an impact on this work; and
- To note that the outcome of 51% of the audits recorded between September 2019 and August 2020 had been "requires improvement" and to ask what steps were taken in these cases.

The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services clarified that this presentation focused on the Quality Assurance Framework and work to improve social work practice, rather than on levels of demand. The Deputy Director of Children's Services informed the Committee that there had been an increase in referrals since the schools had re-opened to all pupils, which was similar to pre-COVID-19 referral levels, but that this had been a gradual increase which the service had had the capacity to manage.

The Strategic Lead for Safeguarding explained how the new judgements from audits were based on quality of practice and impact on children, whereas prior to the introduction of this Framework the emphasis had been on compliance, such as whether the right documents were in the case file. The Social Work Consultant informed the Committee that, where she had audited a case and judged it as "requires improvement", she would have a reflective discussion with the Social Worker and they would put a plan in place, which she would then review with the Social Worker. She also outlined how findings from the audits fed into Workforce Development plans, informed Teaching Tuesday sessions and were used in learning circles to share best practice.

Decision

To thank officers and welcome the work taking place in this area.

CYP/20/46 Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and Strategy for 2021/22

CYP/20/47 Budget Options for 2021/22

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that set out the impact of COVID-19 and other pressures and changes on the Council's budget for the period 2021-2025. The report also set out the impact of COVID-19 on the capital programme and the implications for the budget. The report stated that the budget reflected the fact that the Council had declared a climate emergency by making carbon reduction a key consideration in the Council's planning and budget proposals.

The main points and themes within the report included: -

- The Medium Term Financial Plan remained challenged by uncertainty, which included the outcome of the Spending Review and post 2021/22 the potential changes to how local government funding was distributed;
- Prior to COVID-19 there was an underlying budget gap of c£20m for 2021/22 rising to c£80m by 2024/25;
- Dealing with the impact of COVID-19 had resulted in major spending pressures, particularly in social care, but also across all Directorates;
- The forecasted budget shortfall relating to COVID-19 pressures and the Budget Position 2021/22 to 2024/25;
- Initial proposals across all Directorates to start addressing the budget gap in advance of the Spending Review and Local Government Financial Settlement;
- The need to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment on the options put forward, particularly those that involve impacts on services for residents and reductions in the Council's workforce;
- Proposed consultation on budget options and timescales; and
- Next steps.

The Committee also considered a report of the Strategic Director for Children and Education Services which outlined the financial position and set out officer options for savings against each service area aligned to the Committee's remit to help achieve a balanced budget in 2021/22.

The main points and themes within the report included: -

- Background and context;
- The Directorate's budget approach;
- The Children and Education Services Directorate Revenue Budget 2021/22;
- Areas for consideration, subject to the outcome of the Local Authority Settlement;
- Impact on the workforce;
- Next steps; and
- A summary of the savings proposed.

The Committee was invited to comment on the reports prior to their submission to the Executive on 11 November 2020.

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

- Concern about the financial position the Council was in and the level of funding from the national Government and that Members should lobby the Government for more funding, including money to cover the additional costs the Council had incurred in responding to the pandemic;
- Concern about the number of unknown factors, such as how much the financial package from the Government would be and what the future demand on services would be;
- A suggestion that the Council's reserves could be used to address the funding gaps;
- Concern that any reduction in early intervention would impact negatively on children and their families and be more costly in the long term;
- Concern that the pandemic was disproportionately affecting some groups, such as children and young people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, that budget cuts could embed inequalities further and the importance of looking at Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) when assessing these options;
- Concern about the impact of proposals on families with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF);
- Concern about the removal of Council funding for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) at a time when demand for mental health support was likely to increase; and
- To ask for further information on the £400k saving from the Free Travel budget 2021/22 which was referred to in the report.

The Strategic Director for Children and Education Services informed the Committee that the options for making budget cuts within the Directorate were limited, for example, because much of the Education Services budget came from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which could only be used for limited purposes, and that every possible budget saving option would have an impact on children and young people. He advised that EIAs would be used to assess the impact of the proposals of different groups but it was expected that the proposed savings options would impact across all groups. He advised Members that effective early intervention did reduce costs later; however, there were limited options available for making savings.

In response to a Member's question about the parenting commission referred to in section 4.52 of the Budget Options report, the Deputy Director of Children's Services advised that efficiencies could be made within this and that the specification of which families would be eligible for support under the proposed revised commission was still to be determined. He clarified that section 4.55 of this report referred to costs which could be avoided by preventing children from entering the care system or finding a permanent solution for Our Children (Looked After Children) which enabled them to leave the care of the local authority, using approaches such as Early Help, Alonzi House and permanence planning.

The Strategic Director for Children and Education Services reported that there had been an underspend on the NRPF budget and the proposed budget reduction in this area was to remove that underspend. He informed Members that the removal of

Council funding for CAMHS had been considered by the Committee previously and this decision had already been taken. He advised Members that the national Government had previously provided councils with ringfenced funding for this service but had ceased providing ringfenced funding a few years ago. He reported that, at that time, most councils had stopped providing funding to their local CAMHS service and Manchester City Council had continued to provide this funding for a number of years but had subsequently decided that it could no longer continue to provide this funding. In response to a Member's question, he clarified that the proposed reduction in Early Years Speech and Language referred to in section 4.53 of the Budget Options report related to training for staff on the early identification of young children with speech and language needs. He reported that training on this had already been delivered on a large scale across Early Years and health staff and that specialist support for children in need of speech and language therapy was separate from this.

The Director of Education informed Members that the criteria for eligibility for Free Travel passes to school had already been changed but that passes had continued to be provided for children who had been eligible at the time they started at their current school, even if they would not have been eligible under the new scheme. She advised that the cost of the scheme had reduced over time due to that cohort of pupils who had been eligible under the old scheme moving through the education system and due to improved sufficiency of school places, meaning that more children were able to be allocated a suitable school place near their home than had been the case a few years ago.

Decisions

1. To note that the Committee's comments will be provided to the Executive in advance of its meeting on 11 November 2020.
2. To record the Committee's dissatisfaction with budget proposals which would affect vulnerable children in Manchester but to recognise that this situation is the result of the levels of funding provided by the national Government and that Members will continue to lobby Government on this matter.

CYP/20/48 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.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme.

Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2020

This Scrutiny meeting was conducted via Zoom, in accordance with the provisions of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Present:

Councillor Igbon – in the Chair
Councillors Appleby, Flanagan, Hassan, Hughes, Jeavons, Kilpatrick, Lyons, Razaq, White and Wright

Apologies: Councillors Azra Ali, Butt, Lynch and Whiston

Also present:

Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods
Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure
Councillor Stogia, Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport
Councillor Shilton Godwin, Lead Member for Active Travel

NESC/20/43 Urgent Business: Household Waste and Recycling Centres during COVID-19 lockdown

The Chair introduced an item of urgent business by inviting the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods to provide the Committee with an update as to the operation of Household Waste and Recycling Centres following the recent announcement by the Prime Minister of national lockdown to commence 5 November 2020.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods stated that all the Household Waste and Recycling Centres across Manchester operated by Suez would remain open during the period of lockdown.

Decision

To note the update.

NESC/20/44 Minutes

The Chair informed the Committee that she would be referring the issue of Social Value and Highways to the Chair of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee (see ref NESC/20/41). She further advised that to address the specific questions raised by Members of the Committee in relation to the information that had been provided, a meeting would be convened with the Director of Highways and the Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport.

A Member stated that following the previous meeting he has sought further information regarding the budget arrangements and the waste levy. He stated that it was his opinion that the information reported to the previous meeting had been incorrect. He requested that the Chair take this matter up with the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods following this meeting.

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2020 as a correct record, noting the above comments.

NESC/20/45 Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and Strategy for 2021/22

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that set out the impact of COVID19 and other pressures and changes on the Council's budget for the period 2021-2025. The report also set out the impact of COVID19 on the capital programme and the implications for the budget.

The main points and themes within the report included: -

- The Medium Term Financial Plan remained challenged by uncertainty, which included the outcome of the Spending Review and post 2021/22 the potential changes to how local government funding was distributed;
- Prior to COVID19 there was an underlying budget gap of c£20m for 2021/22 rising to c£80m by 2024/25;
- Dealing with the impact of COVID19 had resulted in major spending pressures, particularly in social care, but also across all Directorates;
- The forecasted budget shortfall relating to COVID19 pressures and the Budget Position 2021/22 to 2024/25;
- Initial proposals across all Directorates to start addressing the budget gap in advance of the Spending Review and Local Government Financial Settlement;
- The need to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment on the options put forward, particularly those that involved impacts on services for residents and reductions in the Council's workforce;
- Proposed consultation on budget options and timescales; and
- Next Steps.

Decision

The Committee notes the report.

NESC/20/46 Neighbourhoods Directorate Budget Options 2021/22

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) that described that as part of the planning for the 2021/22 budget, the Council was estimating a budget gap of £105m in 2021/22 increasing to c £159m in 2022/23, and

all Directorates have been seeking to identify savings options for consideration by Members.

This report set out the details on the initial savings options proposed by officers. The savings options would be considered by all six Scrutiny Committees for those areas within their remit. The Committee was invited to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Executive on 11 November 2020.

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

- Noting that the budget options were being considered in the context of the imposition of a decade of austerity and continued cuts to public services;
- Reducing any staff posts that generated income for the Council would be counterproductive and should be rejected;
- There should be no reduction in staff undertaken enforcement activity;
- Rejecting any proposal to charge residents for the replacement of recycling bins, noting that this could lead to increased rates of flytipping; and
- Rejecting any proposal to reduce the Neighbourhood Investment Fund, noting the positive contribution these made in wards, adding that in the event this had to be considered a cost benefit analysis should be undertaken prior to any final decision being taken.

The Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) responded to questions from Members by clarifying that the report did not set out firm proposals but options that might require further consideration by the Committee following the announcement of the Spending Review and Finance Settlement.

Decision

The Committee recommended that when the Executive are asked to consider the officer cuts and savings options that they take into account the feedback from this scrutiny committee.

[Councillor Appleby declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest as her partner is employed by Biffa.]

NESC/20/47 Homelessness Directorate Budget and Savings Options 2021/22

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Homelessness that provided the high level budget context and priorities for Homelessness across 2021/22 and the feedback from the budget conversation, which had been used for the development of savings options 2021/22 and investment requirements to fund population driven and other budget pressures. The Committee was invited to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Executive on 11 November 2020.

The main points and themes within the report included: -

- Providing an introduction and context of the report;

- An overview of the budget strategy for Homelessness;
- A summary of the directorate budget;
- Describing the savings options and proposals;
- An overview of additional options to be considered;
- Analysis of overall impacts; and
- Workforce impact.

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

- Noting that the budget options were being considered in the context of the imposition of a decade of austerity and cuts to public services;
- Despite the cuts Manchester had sought to defend the most vulnerable residents in the city, and in doing so the Committee paid tribute to all of the staff working in the homelessness service, particularly during the COVID19 pandemic;
- Unanimously reject the officer proposals, commenting that any cuts in this service would have implications on other service budgets ;
- Noting that the cost in providing accommodation for those previously sleeping rough in response to COVID19 and Everyone In was £7m, the Committee called upon the government to meet this cost;
- Noting the positive feedback received on the Everyone In scheme;
- Recommending the establishment of a task force comprised of the Revenue and Benefits Unit, local charities, faith groups and VCSE partners to consider homelessness prevention;
- The GMCA (Greater Manchester Combined Authority) should increase their financial contribution to Manchester to support the work to address homelessness;
- Working in partnership with local registered housing providers, the Capital budget should be used to purchase properties to house homeless families;
- Noting the significant funds paid to private Bed and Breakfast (B&B) providers the Council should commission and manage its own B&B provision;
- Noting the importance of the need to prevent homelessness, the Section 21 team and the Private Rented Sector Team needed to be maintained; and
- Recognising the important work of staff working in the homelessness service the Committee rejected any proposal to reduce staffing.

The Director of Homelessness welcomed the comments from the Members. He stated that it was recognised that the use of B&B accommodation was not always appropriate, particularly for families. He stated that the Service Transformation Programme would form the core of the approach to tackling and reducing homelessness over the next three years. It would be the framework in which reductions in temporary accommodation and rough sleeping would be achieved through a radical reorganisation of the Homelessness Service and its activities. The programme would focus on five key areas; the strategic vision, redesigning the journey through the system, prevention, accommodation and communication and development.

The Director of Homelessness stated that the Section 21 Team had been funded through an uplift in the service budget as part of the previous year's budget

considerations and commented that it was anticipated that evictions might increase as a result of COVID19.

The Director of Homelessness responded to the suggestion of establishing a task force by describing that the multi agency Manchester Homeless Partnership was already established. In response to the positive comments received regarding the Everyone In service he stated that this had achieved many positive outcomes for the individuals they had assisted, noting that this had been achieved by working collaboratively with VCSE partners.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure stated that despite the promises made to Manchester and all other local authorities that financial assistance would be made available to support councils to accommodate homeless people during the pandemic this had not been provided. He described this as a failure of government, however despite this Manchester had responded to the situation and sought to support the most vulnerable residents in the city and he now called upon the government to fund Manchester appropriately and fairly.

Decisions

The Committee recommended that when the Executive are asked to consider the officer cuts and savings options that they take into account the feedback and recommendations from this scrutiny committee.

1. The Committee reject the homelessness options as described within the report.
2. The Committee recommend that Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure write to the government and ask for the additional £7 million for the continued provision of accommodation during the COVID19 pandemic for those who previously slept rough.
3. The Committee recommend that that Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure establish a task force comprised of the Revenue and Benefits Unit, local charities, faith groups and VCSE partners to consider homelessness prevention work.
4. The Committee recommend that the Council, in partnership with local registered housing providers should purchase properties funded via the capital budget to house homeless families.
5. The Committee recommend that the Greater Manchester Combined Authority should reimburse Manchester the £0.5m to fund the A Bed Every Night provision.

NESC/20/48 Active Travel

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) that provided an overview of the activities undertaken to promote active travel and connectivity across the city.

The main points and themes within the report included: -

- Activities undertaken with both schools and neighbourhoods;
- Physical infrastructure to support active travel and future plans;
- How active travel linked into the climate change emergency to reduce carbon and improve clean air;
- An update on Government Funding for active travel and what other avenues were being accessed;
- Options for further pop up cycle lanes and other measures in the city; and
- How the Council measured the objectives of Active travel.

The Chair invited the Neighbourhood Officer for Hulme to address the Committee on the Junior PCSO scheme that had been established in the ward. The Officer described the background to the scheme, the work and engagement undertaken with local schools, children and their parents. She described the benefits and positive outcomes of the scheme and how this contributed to the wider climate change ambitions of the Council.

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

- Noting the inspiring and positive contribution that the Junior PCSO scheme had delivered and recommending that this good practice and learning should be shared across all wards;
- Noting that the positive activities and initiatives with schools and local communities seemed to be concentrated in certain areas and there was a distinct lack of these delivered in the north of the city and in Wythenshawe;
- Investment in infrastructure to support active travel and improve connectivity was required in North Manchester; and
- An update was sought on the government funding to support active travel.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport informed the Committee that all provisions, such as Play Streets were advertised and available across all areas of the city and not restricted to certain areas. She stated that schools were contacted and offered support to deliver local schemes however it was the decision of the individual schools to take up this offer. She noted that she recognised the significant challenge schools had faced this year as a result of COVID19 however the options and support of local Neighbourhood Teams still remained. The Director of Education confirmed that information was regularly shared with schools and this would be raised again via Virtual Head Teacher Meetings, with consideration given to a targeted approach.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods stated that all Ward Plans should include Climate Change and the Head of Neighbourhoods confirmed that the local team did engage with schools in the Wythenshawe area and this work and dialogue with schools would continue.

A Member of the Committee commented on the work undertaken by local Councillors and schools in North Manchester and she offered to share this experience and lessons learnt with other Neighbourhood Teams across the city. The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport welcomed this and commented

upon the important roles local Members had in supporting and promoting active travel initiatives.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport addressed the issue of government funding by stating that despite repeated promises and public statements regarding the importance of active travel the government had failed to respond to the funding bids submitted. She described this as a failure of government and challenged the Chancellor to address this. She described the current situation as very frustrating as Manchester had many initiatives and schemes planned and were keen to progress this important area of work as quickly as possible.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport stated that conversations continued with both Transport for Greater Manchester and the Walking and Cycling Commissioner to explore all funding options.

The Committee then heard from Councillor Shilton Godwin, Lead Member for Active Travel who stated that the need for active travel was very important particularly at this time, commenting that this activity could improve people's resilience to the pandemic and significantly contribute to clean air. She supported the comments of the Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport and repeated the call on government to adequately fund this important area of work and help Manchester realise its climate change ambitions.

Decision

The Committee recommend that the Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport promote with all schools the Junior PCSO School Scheme, working collaboratively with local Neighbourhood Teams, Education and the Highways Service.

[Councillor Hughes declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest as he is employed as a bus driver in Manchester.]

NESC/20/49 Monitoring and Compliance - Construction Sites

The Chair announced that due to the time constraints upon the Committee having given due consideration to the the budget reports she recommended that this item of business be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

Decision

To defer consideration of this report to the next meeting of the Committee.

NESC/20/50 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.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme noting the decision to defer the previous agenda item.