

Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 3 November 2020

This Scrutiny meeting was conducted via Zoom, in accordance with the provisions of the 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 Russell (Chair) – in the Chair
Councillors Ahmed Ali, Andrews, Clay, Davies, Lanchbury, B Priest, Rowles, A Simcock, Stanton, Wheeler and Wright

Also present:

Councillor Akbar, Executive member for Neighbourhoods
Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children and Schools
Councillor Leese, Leader
Councillor Hitchen (Minutes RGSC/20/46 and RGSC/20/47 only)
Councillor Igbon (Minute RGSC/20/48 only)

RGSC/20/45 Minutes

Decision

The Committee approves the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020 as a correct record

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

The Committee decided to take consideration of this report and the following report (Corporate Core Budget Options 2020/21) together. As such, the Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer and City Solicitor that set out the impact of COVID19 and other pressures and changes on the Council's budget for the period 2021/22, including the impact of COVID19 on the capital programme and the implications for the budget and a report that set out the details on the initial savings options proposed by officers to address the estimated initial budget gap of £105m in 2021/22,

The main points and themes within the first 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.

The main points and themes in the second report included:

- The Corporate Core Directorate had a net budget of £76.9m, with 1,823fte's employees;
- Currently the Corporate Core Directorate had identified officer cut proposals of £7.127m, which broadly equated to a reduction of 130fte's, against which there were c33 vacancies;
- A breakdown of the savings proposals on a service by service basis, including officer options for other service areas outside of the Corporate Core which formed part of the remit of the Committee;
- If further budgets cuts were required, options for an additional £7.3m had been identified, however, this would reduce the Corporate Core headcount by a further 124fte and reduce capacity down to the provision of the bare minimum;
- In order to achieve the reductions, set out in the report, the council would open a limited voluntary redundancy/voluntary early retirement scheme predominately in those areas in the corporate core which were aiming to achieve staffing reductions;
- Consultations had started with Trades Unions on the MPeople processes to ensure that the Council did not lose focus on providing support for the workforce to develop and progress and where relevant to reskill into different roles; and
- The Directorate budget proposals would be subject to further refinement following feedback from Scrutiny Committee and updated prior to being submitted to Executive. A further report would be brought back to Scrutiny in January 2021 that incorporated the feedback from this meeting, the budget consultation, the impact of the Finance Settlement and the outcomes of the VER/VS scheme.

The Leader made brief comments on the first report which included the additional funding of £24m received from Government to tackle COVID19 which would reduce the use of reserves this year to allow greater use of reserves in next year and future years budgets. He clarified that this funding did not address the revenue gap and was a one-off payment. In terms of the Capital Budget there was significant increase in costs around construction schemes related to COVID19 and inflation. This meant the capital programme would be continually reviewed to ensure it related to the priorities set out within the budget. He added that there was a need to be mindful of false economies by delaying schemes to future years which could result in a risk of costs increasing.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer commented that the ongoing impact of COVID19 was resulting in a significant gap in the Council's budget position for 2021/22 which was expected to worsen in 2022/23 and whilst it was hoped that over time, the impact of COVID19 would reduce, this would be when the underlying budget pressures would take effect. Because of this, there was a need to start work now on how this budget gap could be reduced, in advance of the Government's Spending Review, which was anticipated to be announced on 25 November 2020. She emphasised that whilst all efforts would be made to minimise the impact on other Council services and residents, it was likely that there was going to be a need for substantial budget reductions across the council regardless of what funding would be provided through the Spending Review.

What followed was a lengthy and thorough discussion on the proposed budget options. Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussion were:

- Grave concern was expressed about the continued need for the Council to reduce its budgets year on year due to the withdrawal of financial support from government, including cuts to budgets that provided services to the most vulnerable residents of the city;
- It was felt that the Council was unable to plan its budgets effectively with one-year settlements from Government and it was hoped that Government would provide a sustainable long-term solution to enable the Council to make longer term budget plans;
- Concern was expressed regarding the proposed reduction in funding provided to the Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme and would drive increased cost in other areas, and a question was asked as to whether analysis had been done to calculate what proportion of those who were supported through DHP would become homeless if this was cut, and at what on-costs to the system, including through potential increased Children's Services involvement;
- It was suggested the budget reduction proposals to the DHP were not put forward to the Executive for consideration before greater analysis of the impact of this reduction might have on some of the city's most vulnerable residents and associated impact on other services budgets;
- There was concern in relation to digital exclusion for some of the most deprived residents and communities in the City as the Council moved to more digital interactions with its residents;
- It was queried whether proposals to reduce jobs in service areas that provided essential services to the city's most vulnerable residents was the correct approach;
- It was asked that the Chancellor of the Exchequer provided the Council with the funding it required in order not to make staff redundant and continue to provide the services needed for the City's most vulnerable residents and communities;
- Assurance was sought that the number of proposed redundancies across the Directorate had been mapped against the areas that would be targeted through the proposed Early Retirement/Voluntary Redundancy scheme to ensure the right areas were being targeted;

- Why was the Council's Communications Department only proposing a reduction of three posts when other service areas with a similar level of staff were being required to offer up more staffing reductions;
- There was concern about the proposed loss of posts across Audit and Policy Performance and Reform;
- What would happen if the Council was unable to set a balanced budget;
- Could Officers work on proposals to move traders on Wythenshawe indoor Market to the outdoor market;
- Could any assurance be given that Manchester Fayre would continue to be funded to provide school meals to Manchester Schools;
- Clarification was sought on what would be the level of Council Tax increase needed to bridge the finding gap;
- Further information was sought on the sale and lease back proposals;
- Did the proposals to end the joint venture with NCP relate to all NCP car parks;
- It was suggested that the projected savings from the return of NCP car parks to the Council was overestimated as it was based on those car parks returning to a level of pre-COVID use;
- It was suggested that the wording used in relation to the income generation targets made in bereavement services be revisited and rephrased more appropriately;
- Would Equality Impact Assessments be undertaken on the proposed budget savings; and
- What impact would the proposed savings have on Manchester's Voluntary and Community Sector.

The Director of Customer Services and Transactions advised that in relation to the DHP, the Council received £2.538m government funding. The extra £2m that the Council had put into this scheme had been due to the impact of Universal Credit and Homelessness. There had been some changes that had reduced the amount of DHP spend in the last few years, including changes in the Local Housing Allowance rates and changes to the cost of placing homeless families in dispersed accommodation. She added that up to the present day, the Council, had spent £1.6m of the DHP budget and had committed a further £682,000, totalling £2.285 and it was anticipated that even taking into account the impact of COVID19, of the additional £2 million that the Council had allocated to this scheme, it would only need to spend £800,000. Consequently, it was felt that the Council could meet demand from the funding received from Government alone, but she said that if the amount reduced that some people would have to be denied support who would currently receive it. It was also clarified that the Council was not proposing to close its front line service offer as it moved to more digital interactions and there would still be the opportunity for residents to speak to staff in person and the Director of Customer Services and Transactions highlighted the smarter ways of working that were being offered to residents to enable them to interact with the Council in a more effective way that suited them.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer advised that the potential impact of total job losses in the Directorate was 130ftes, with the first phase of officer options offering a reduction of 130ftes of which 33 were vacant posts. An Early

Retirement/Voluntary Redundancy scheme would be made available which would be targeted where the reductions needed to be made but would not be closed off to the rest of the Council in order to create some capacity for movement. It was hoped that there would not result in the need for compulsory redundancies.

The Director of PPR advised that the proposed reductions in PPR were put forward as a fair and proportionate contribution to the savings needed and whilst difficult, would be manageable to maintain capacity within the service.

The City Solicitor advised that in relation to the Communications Department proposals it was hoped that through VER/VS there would be an opportunity to restructure the service to deliver further saving efficiencies.

It was explained that the Council had a legal responsibility to set a balance budget and if it was unable to do so then this would result in the need to declare a Section 114 notice. This would require an emergency budget and effectively end local political control.

The Director of Commercial and Operations (Neighbourhoods) confirmed that the Council was working with St Modwins to identify options to extend the outdoor market at Wythenshawe. If possible, this would require capital cost which would need to be analysed to see if they generated value for money, but it was noted that not all traders would be able to operate on an outdoor market. In relation to Manchester Fayre, whilst acknowledging the service the organisation had provided during pandemic, he advised that this was not a statutory council service and the amount of subsidy required going forward was in excess of £600,000 per year. The Council currently lost a school, every eight weeks, who sought an alternative provider which was impacting on the economies of scale of the service and it was no longer possible to provide the service on a cost-effective basis.

The Leader advised that in order to bridge the funding gap through increased contributions via Council Tax, this would require approximately a 70% increase in Council Tax across all bandings and could not be an option as this would place too large a burden on Manchester residents.

The Director of Commercial and Operations (Neighbourhoods) advised that only the NCP carparks that the Council owned would revert to the Council which equated to 13 sites. He acknowledged the point made in relation to the wording around bereavement services.

The Strategy Director (Growth and Development) gave a brief overview of the possible intentions of the sale and lease back proposals as part of a wider corporate estate review.

The Director of PPR clarified that those budget saving options that required an Equality Impact Assessment would have one as part of the final budget saving proposals as well as the impact of these options on other areas. He added that cuts to the Our Manchester VCS funding were not included in the initial tranche of Officer options, but it was anticipated that there would be some reductions in VCSE funding as part of the further set of options. A piece of work had commenced to map the

current VCSE funding across the Council and key partners in order to better understand the impact of any proposed cuts.

The City Treasurer confirmed that in addition to individual EIA's, there would be a piece of cross-budget analysis done to look at the overall equality impact of the budget decisions.

Decision

The Committee:

- (1) Requests that the budget savings proposals in relation to the Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme and Customer Services are not put forward to the Executive until the Committee receives further reports at its next meeting in December, which provide an analysis of the impact these proposals will have on the City's most vulnerable residents and other associated Council Services.
- (2) Requests that the Executive take on board all the comments made by the Committee.
- (3) Requests that as part of the discussions with Government, Officers urge the Chancellor of the Exchequer to provide the Council with the funding it requires in order for it to not have to make staff redundant and to be able to continue to provide the services needed for the City's most vulnerable residents and communities.
- (4) Requests for further information on the sale and leaseback proposals contained within the report be provided to Committee Members.

RGSC/20/47 Budget options for 2021/22

This item was covered in the above minute (RGSC/20/46).

RGSC/20/48 Workforce Equality Strategy

The Committee considered a report of the Director of HROD, which set out the strategy for achieving workforce equality in Manchester City Council. The strategy covered some of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act, specifically race, disability, age and sexuality and contained an emphasis on analysis and actions relating to race equality, and in particular, to the review carried out last year of race relations and discrimination within the Council.

Key points and themes in the report included:-

- It was the ambition of the Council to achieve a workforce that would reflect at all levels and in all professional and vocational groups, the diversity of Manchester's working age population;
- Through the strategy, the Council intended to be more diverse at senior levels in the Council, through progression of existing staff and external recruitment, particularly from Manchester;

- The Strategy would enable Managers to be more confident in their understanding and creation of racial equality and have a better understanding of the lived experience of the Council's Black, Asian and ethnic minority staff;
- It was envisaged that the Strategy would enable Black, Asian and ethnic minority employees across the Council to realise their full potential;
- Through the strategy the Council would aim to employ more Asian and particularly Pakistani, and Chinese staff;
- The Council would endeavour to improve its equality data collection in order to have better data on which to make decisions; and
- The Strategy would change the culture of the Council, making it a more inclusive organisation which better valued diversity and focussed on outcomes.

The Executive Member for Children and Schools briefly commented on the report and hoped that the Strategy put some of the Committee's previous discussions around the feedback of the Race Equality Working Group into more context and reassured the Committee as to how much of a priority this was for the Council.

The Director of HROD commented that the action plan within the Strategy provided the building blocks to where the Council needed to concentrate its efforts in improving monitoring; developing Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff; engagement and communication; HR policies; and leadership.

A thorough debate on the issue then took place and some of the key points that arose from the Committees discussions were:-

- The Strategy was a positive starting position for the Council, however some Members felt strongly that Race Equality should be a separate strategy to the Workforce Equality Strategy;
- It was felt that monitoring of race equality with tangible outcomes was needed;
- It was commented that there was a lack of Black employees at senior levels in the Council and the Strategy needed to acknowledge this as this was a key aspect of the Race Review;
- It was felt that there was a need to put active measures in place in terms of addressing race inequalities;
- There was concern that the number of staff identified in any characteristic was very low and the Strategy needed to address this lack of data and improve staff trust in using this data to improve outcomes;
- There was a need to truly embed the change of culture that the Strategy looked to bring about to make any real long term change;
- Clarity was sought on the number of people who had been engaged with from the various protected characteristics in forming and developing the strategy;
- There was concern of the lack of data collected from transgender and non-binary staff;
- Further work was needed in standardising aspects of the strategy as information and data on different protected characteristics was being collected from multiple facets;
- The Council needed to demonstrate it understood what it meant to be a disabled person when trying to identify staff classed as disabled;

- It was hoped that the spirit and approach to addressing race equality would spread to the other protected characteristics;
- There needed to be strengthening in the proposals for leaders and managers to behave in a particular way in order to deliver equality and held accountable, not just gain a better understanding of, as the Strategy referred;
- It was suggested that training awareness of racism was put in place for all staff and Councillors, and Councillors should be afforded the opportunity to be part of the working groups that had been set up;
- It was asked if the Lead Members for the various equality strands had been consulted on the draft;
- It would be appreciated if there was clarity around the quantitative and qualitative data in the final version of the strategy; and
- How was it envisaged that the Council's Senior Management would reflect the city, when it recruited from further afield.

The Director of HROD commented that the separate Race Review and Race Equality Steering Group generated a lot of the recommendations within the Strategy and a Project Manager had been appointed to progress those recommendations associated with race and ethnicity. However, it needed to be acknowledged that there were intersectionalities that needed to also be addressed through the Equalities Strategy. The Executive Member for Children and Schools commented that the Strategy should be viewed as a complementary piece of work to the Race Equality Review and Action Plan addressing the lack of a council wide equality strategy and clarified that it was not intended to subsume the work of the Race Review. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods commented that the Strategy did not shy away from the issues regarding race inequalities within the Council.

It was commented that the collection and monitoring of data would be critical to any successful progress and the building of trust and understanding from staff would be essential for improvements to be achieved. The Chief Executive added that the power of the strategy was in the conversations that needed to be built with staff in relation to changing the Council's culture and enabling it to be at the progressive forefront.

The Director of HROD explained who had been consulted with from the various protected characteristic groups so far and the Executive Member for Children and Families added that the consultation had not yet completed, and more consultation was planned with a wider staff cohort as well as trade unions, and the Lead Members for the various equality strands.

It was reported that the Council did not hold any data on staff who were transgender but the Director of HROD would be meeting with the LGBT Staff Group to plan a course of action to address this. It was also commented that as the last round of census data was now so old, personal independence claims were used as a way of understanding the disability in the working age population as the best comparison method. Members of the Committee queried this, as PIP payments were dependent on a more significant level of disability than would be covered by the Equality Act definition of disability, which would cover much larger numbers of people. It was suggested by the Committee that the model of disability being used required greater clarity. It was proposed that if it was felt that this was not appropriate Officers could

look at what other information was available to compare with the rest of the population.

Members queried the lack of reference to religion and belief as a protected characteristic. It was also explained that it was not possible with the data collected to draw conclusions for actions against all of the nine protected characteristics, such as religion.

The Chair recommended that Officers collected more information on those protected characteristics where not enough data had been gathered to form any actions, as it was not appropriate to just ignore those characteristics on the basis that the Council had not enough information. Both Executive Members acknowledged that data collection and monitoring would be a critical part of the action plan and in some areas the data collected to date had been inadequate. An undertaking was given to take up the point made around the lack of data collected on Religion.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer acknowledged the points that had been made by the Committee but commented that the Strategy would be a starting position for the Council with specific action plans underpinning it that Officers could be held accountable to.

The point raised on strengthening the proposals for leaders and managers to behave in a particular way in order to deliver equality and held accountable was supported by the Executive Members and Officers.

The Chair then sought the Committee's vote as to whether the race equalities aspect should be separated from the Strategy. On putting it to the vote there was not a majority of Committee Members in support of recommending that the race equality aspect be separated from the strategy.

Decisions

The Committee:-

- (1) Requests that Officers take on board the comments made by the Committee in finalising the Strategy.
- (2) Recommends that training on race awareness is provided to all staff and Elected Members.
- (3) Requests that the lead members for the other protected characteristics are engaged with prior to the final iteration of the Strategy being submitted to the Executive for adoption.

RGSC/20/49 Our Manchester Strategy Reset - Engagement Activity and Findings

Further to Minute RGSC/20/ 38 (Our Manchester Strategy Reset – Timescales), the Committee considered a further report of the Director of Policy, Partnership and Reform, that provided an overview of the engagement activity undertaken to inform the Our Manchester Strategy reset, and the findings and emerging priorities from it.

Key points and themes of the report included:-

- Approximately 3,700 people had been directly engaged with and had their views captured, which compared favourably to the original Our Manchester Strategy engagement in 2015 when approximately 2,000 people were directly engaged;
- Resident engagement had included a universal engagement offer, supplemented with targeted engagement to key cohorts of residents who either had traditionally not engaged with digital communication or who had been particularly affected by COVID19;
- A summary of the resident engagement, which covered respondents, neighbourhoods, gender, age, ethnicity and disability;
- The engagement undertaken with businesses and organisations to specifically gather opinions on the priorities, challenges and opportunities Manchester faced over the next five years;
- A summary of the engagement sessions that had been held with 16 partnership boards, including all boards that report into the Our Manchester Forum, to capture their thoughts on what Manchester should prioritise over the next five years;
- The engagement undertaken with the Our Manchester Forum and Council staff;
- A summary of key priority themes identified from the analysis of all the engagement activity undertaken; and
- Detailed next steps.

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

- It was surprising to see that policing and anti-social behaviour was not a high priority for residents when compared to the consultation on the original strategy;

The Deputy Leader advised that this was probably due to the current circumstance that residents were facing when the consultation on the re-set was undertaken, with health taking a higher priority for people.

Decision

The Committee notes the findings from the Our Manchester Strategy reset engagement activity and the next steps.

RGSC/20/50 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.

Decisions

The Committee:-

- (1) Note the report.

- (2) Note that the Chair will finalise the Work Programme for the next meeting in consultation with Officers.

Economy Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 5 November 2020

This Scrutiny meeting was conducted via Zoom, in accordance with the provisions of the 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 H Priest (Chair) – in the Chair
Councillors Hacking, Johns, Noor, Raikes, Shilton Godwin, K Simcock and Stanton

Also present:

Councillor Leese, Leader
Councillor Richards, Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration

Apologies: Councillor Green

ESC/20/40 Minutes

Decision

The Committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2020.

ESC/20/41 Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and Strategy for 2021/22

The Committee decided to take consideration of this report and the following report (Growth and Development Budget Options 2020/21) together. As such, 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, including the impact of COVID19 on the capital programme and the implications for the budget and a report that set out the details on the initial savings options proposed by officers to address the estimated initial budget gap of £105m in 2021/22,

The main points and themes within the first 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.

The main points and themes in the second report included:

- The Growth and Development Directorate had a gross budget of £63m, and a net budget of circa £9.1m, with 636.5 full time equivalent (fte) posts;
- Overall the Directorate had identified savings totalling circa. £2.314m. This would require a reduction of circa 22fte posts;
- Due to lead in time around required investments and timing on some contracts/leases, the £2.314m would be phased over the period 2021/22-2024/25, with an initial £2.024m being delivered in 2021/22;
- The options identified that were under the remit of this Committee totalled £0.733m and required a reduction of 11fte posts;
- A breakdown of the savings proposals on a service by service basis;
- If further budgets cuts were required, options for a further £2m with an additional reduction of 30fte posts had been identified for further development. It was recognised that if this were required there would be an unavoidable impact on the service offer to residents, businesses and communities;
- The specific options under the remit of this Committee would deliver circa £1.1m deeper cuts which would require service redesigns across a number of areas in order to support the reduction in 30fte's; and
- The Directorate budget proposals would be subject to further refinement following feedback from Scrutiny Committee and updated prior to being submitted to Executive. A further report would be brought back to January Scrutiny that incorporated the feedback from this meeting, the budget consultation and the impact of the Finance Settlement.

The Leader made brief comments on the first report which included the difficult position the Council would face in setting a sustainable budget for the next three years without further financial support from government. He also commented on the support needed from government in the short term to manage the loss of commercial income from the Airport.

The Strategic Director (Growth and Development) commented that the Growth and Development Team was central to the economic recovery of the city, and whilst it was acknowledged that savings and efficiencies needed to be made, the proposals put forward would have an impact on the Council's ability to support the city's economic recovery and growth.

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

- If the Council needed to make significant budget cuts would it still be able to deliver the outcomes in the Our Manchester Strategy;

- Concern was raised in relation to the potential increase in youth unemployment as a result of the savings that would be required in supporting work and skills for youth unemployment;
- Concern was raised in relation to how the proposed savings would impact on the ability for Building Control and to respond promptly to developments that did not have planning permission;
- Would anything be put in place to support staff who would have to absorb additional work as a result of the proposed cuts in posts;
- Had there been any learning from poor investment decisions in the city's economy as a result of the pandemic;
- It was an indictment on government that they were failing to see the dire financial situation that Manchester and other Councils were facing as a result of the pandemic having initially promised to support local authorities with whatever funding they needed to tackle the pandemic;
- Had the longer term consequences of potential further cuts been identified and the impact of these measured;
- Concern was expressed about the impact of the cuts on opportunities for women in the economy;
- Clarity was sought as to what would be the consequence if the Council was unable to set a balanced budget; and
- Could examples be given of how the Council could be creative in its future income generation, whilst protecting its budgetary position

The Strategic Director (Growth and Development) the Council was working hard to create opportunities for its most disadvantaged residents and communities but with the loss of resources and income, the Council would not be able to do as much as it would want to. Assurance was given that the Council was working to find partners who shared similar issues to work with, bringing public and private finance together and be creative, working in new and enterprising ways.

In terms of Building Control, the Planning Department worked on a cost neutral basis but it was acknowledged that with less staff in post it could lead to delays in the planning and building control process. It was commented that the Council was looking at how more could be done digitally in the Planning process.

The Director of Inclusive Economy advised that following the end of Future Jobs Fund, the Council had set a small fund going to support a scheme entitled My Future Intermediate Labour Market, which was used to support the most disadvantaged young people, by working with employers to offer apprenticeships and job opportunities. With the introduction of Kickstart, which overlapped with the schemes purpose, it had been proposed to offer this scheme as a saving.

It was reported that the Council had a number of schemes available to support staff around health and wellbeing. It was recognised that Senior Managers would need to take responsibility to ensure that their staff were not overburdened with additional workloads and that the re-prioritisation of work would likely be required.

The Strategic Director (Growth and Development) commented that the long term impact of these cuts could have a detrimental effect on the Council's ability to deliver

its inclusive growth agenda and housing agenda as well as the long term prosperity of the city.

The Leader advised that the Council had a legal responsibility to set a balance budget and if it was unable to do so then this would result in the need to declare a Section 114 notice which in effect would result in Government taking control of the Council and setting the Council's budget, effectively abandoning local political control.

The Strategic Director (Growth and Development) advised that the Council could be creative in future income generation through the cornerstones of the Council's recovery plan – green growth, digital and health innovation were cited as examples.

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.

ESC/20/42 Report on the budget options for 2021/22

In conjunction with the previous report, the Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director (Growth and Development), which set out the details on the initial savings options proposed by officers to address the estimated initial budget gap of £105m in 2021/22, which would increase to £159m in 2022/23.

The key points and themes in the report included:-

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

XXXX

Decision

The Committee

ESC/20/43 North Manchester Health Campus Strategic Regeneration Framework

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director (Growth and Development), which detailed the draft Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) to support the proposed redevelopment of the existing North Manchester General Hospital site in Crumpsall.

Key points and themes in the report included:-

- The context and drivers for change in North Manchester;

- The vision of the draft Strategic Regeneration Framework, which covered five key elements for the campus and the guiding principles which underpinned the vision;
- An overview of the anticipated socio-economic benefits from the North Manchester Health Campus investment;
- The contribution the SRF would bring to achieving a Zero-Carbon City; and
- Next steps.

The Leader made brief comments on the progress that had been made with the proposed redevelopment over the last 12 months, including £58 million enabling funding that had been secured to date.

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

- Members welcomed the redevelopment and progress that was being made and noted the positive opportunities that would arise from this;
- The people centred element to the redevelopment proposals was positively welcomed;
- It was recognised that the project would deliver real tangible economic benefits for the city, including wellbeing
- It was hoped that the project would attract other major employers who could become anchor institutions in the city;
- What assurance could be given that further funding would be received from government to deliver the entire project

The Leader advised that government had allocated a budget for the project but the Council would still need to make a strategic business case for further funding, however having secured £58 million enabling funding so far demonstrated the governments commitment to the project.

The Director of Inclusive Economy advised that in terms of the question around further anchor institutions there had been exciting work already around the possibility of the project being an international centre for healthy aging which would drive research and commercial output, providing a specialism for north Manchester that would complement other health and innovation across the city. It was also reported that the Council was also working with Ekosgen on defining the economic benefits of the project.

The Strategic Director (Growth and Development) commented that this project presented a real opportunity to undertake serious transformation for the north of the city and its residents.

Decision

The Committee endorse the recommendations put to the Executive, those being that the Executive is recommended to:

- (1) Endorse the draft North Manchester Health Campus Strategic Regeneration Framework attached as Annex 1 of this report as a basis for public consultation;

- (2) Request that a further report be brought back to the Executive following the public consultation exercise, summarising the consultation responses and any amendments that have been incorporated into a final version of the SRF, which will be presented for consideration and approval.

ESC/20/44 ALMO review - Offer to Tenants

Further to Minute RGSC/20/33 (Housing Revenue Account Delivery model - Northwards ALMO Review), the Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive, which provided an update on the progress in developing the case for tenants leading to a full consultation and “test of opinion”.

Key points and themes in the report included:-

- Throughout September there had been 12 workshops to assess core direct core service delivery issues and 9 workshops to consider support (back office) service issues. This was predicated initially on the view that the housing service transferred from Northwards would be delivered within the compatible council service;
- Whilst the need to address the pressures on the HRA had been a key driver, the overriding consideration always had been protecting and improving services to tenants;
- Amongst the issues are a number of risk areas that could have an effect on our ability to sustain a high-quality service to tenants, which included–
 - Covid related budget impacts
 - New repairs contractor
 - ICT issues
- Northwards, as part of their contributions to the workshops, were also able to share their experience of service delivery and make suggestions on future service design
- Details of the practicalities of ‘Return the service to the council’ option;
- A summary of Governance and accountability proposals; and
- Details of the proposed statutory consultation that would be undertaken if the service offer was supported.

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

- Welcoming the report and the progress that was reported, noting that the views and comments of this Committee had been taken into account;
- Welcoming the reported dialogue with Northwards staff;
- Noting the reported findings of the due diligence review undertaken, would similar reviews be undertaken across all homes that the Council had responsibility for;
- How would the proposals align with the economic opportunities to be realised by the Northern Gateway development programme and the North Manchester Health Campus Strategic Regeneration Framework;
- Further information was requested on the future of Manchester Move, noting that this was currently managed and administered by Northwards Housing; and

- Noting the proposed next steps, what would be the position if the proposals were not supported by Northwards tenants and how was this to be assessed.

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration stated that the rationale for the proposal was to drive improvements in the housing stock, invest in fire safety and contribute to the city's carbon emissions targets. She described that dialogue had commenced with staff and teams at Northwards to consider the best options for achieving any transfer with the preferred option being a 'lift and shift' approach, as this would reduce any risk to the service experienced by tenants and maintain continuity of staff and systems that tenants were familiar with. She stated that dialogue and staff engagement events would continue, adding that an 'Our Manchester' listening exercise would be delivered with Northwards staff.

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration informed the Committee that it was the intention to align the economic developments and opportunities that were being created in the north of the city with Northwards tenants. Noting that the planned improvements to the housing stock would also deliver further economic opportunities for local residents.

In regard to Manchester Move, the Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration stated that consultation would be required as to how this was delivered and managed, noting that this was currently well managed, using the Council's agreed allocations policy that had been designed to support and prioritise the most vulnerable residents in the city. The Director of Housing and Residential Growth stated that the fifteen Registered Housing Providers, who allocates their properties using the Manchester Move system would be consulted with, via the Housing Access Board.

The Director of Housing and Residential Growth stated that he recognised the comment from a Member regarding the findings of the due diligence review, and added that they would seek to engage with and review existing arrangements with all schemes where the Council ultimately retained overall oversight. In response to a question relating to the management of a number of bungalows outside of the city boundary, he advised that these were historical arrangements and information on this would be provided to the Member following the meeting.

In regard to the question relating to the test to be applied to measure tenant support for these proposals, the Director of Housing and Residential Growth advised the Committee that there was no prescribed requirement to hold a ballot, however if there was negative support for the scheme, having listened to the views of all tenants further consideration of these proposals would be required. He stated that the logic and rationale of the scheme and the benefits to the housing stock would hopefully encourage tenants to support these proposals.

Decisions

The Committee endorse the recommendations to the Executive that;

- (1) Note the outcome of the workshops and the summary of the service offer that will be put to tenants in a "test of opinion".
- (2) Note the support provided by Northwards Board and Executive for the proposal.
- (3) Note the proposals contained within the report about how the new council-controlled service will be governed and how tenants will be involved and empowered in the decision making about services to homes and communities.
- (4) A final report will be presented in January 2021 with the outcome of the "test of opinion" and to confirm the final decision.

ESC/20/45 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.

The Chair informed the Members that at the December meeting the Committee would be considering a report on the Digital Strategy, noting that the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee would consider the inclusion aspect of the Strategy at their December meeting. In response to a comment from a Member she further advised that consideration would be given to scheduling an item on the Economic Recovery of the Airport.

Decisions

The Committee:-

- (1) Notes the report.
- (2) Agrees the Work Programme noting the comments above.

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 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 Hacking - In the Chair

Councillors Andrews, Chambers, Collins, M Dar, Doswell, Evans, Grimshaw, Hitchen, Kirkpatrick, Moore, Rawlins, Rawson and Russell

Also present:

Councillor Murphy, Deputy Leader

Councillor Craig, Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure

Councillor Stogia, Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport

Barbara Guest, Independent Choices

Apologies:

Councillor Douglas

CESC/20/41 Minutes

A Member highlighted that the information requested at the last meeting, in relation to the review of symbols across the city, had not been circulated to Members. The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure stated that he would provide this to Committee Members after the meeting.

The Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport provided a brief update following the item at the previous meeting on the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. She informed Members that the organisations which were currently being funded through the Our Manchester VCS Fund, whose funding had been due to finish at the end of March 2021, would have their funding extended by three months. She advised that the future of the fund would be considered as part of the wider budget proposals and that the Council was waiting for news of the financial settlement from the national Government. The Chair welcomed that the existing funding arrangements had been extended.

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2020 as a correct record.

CESC/20/42 Peterloo Memorial

The Committee received a report of the Director of City Centre Growth and Infrastructure which provided details of the arrangements for a public meeting on the 18 November 2020. The report stated that the construction of the Peterloo Memorial

was undertaken in the context of Manchester achieving its zero-carbon target for the city and that the location of the Memorial was easily accessible using sustainable modes of transport.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure introduced the report. The main points included:

- The context of and background to the development of the Memorial;
- The options considered to make the monument fully accessible and why these had not been workable;
- Proposals for a temporary ramp around the anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre;
- That lessons had been learnt from the mistakes made; and
- The purpose of the virtual public meeting on 18 November 2020.

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

- That some Committee Members had not received their invitation to the meeting on 18 November 2020;
- Concern that the meeting had been arranged at short notice and that it was important to carry this out in the right way, including ensuring that it was accessible;
- A lack of clarity regarding who the meeting was for and could the meeting be open to all interested parties;
- That it had not been made clear to everyone why the ramp option proposed in February was not considered suitable;
- That the lessons learnt and the changes to processes should be a formal document or framework;
- Could the temporary ramp be available at other times if groups requested it;
- Could the costings for all the options be made available at the public meeting; and
- Would the costs of putting in place the temporary ramp every year be sustainable in future years, given the Council's financial situation.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure agreed to put in place a formal policy or strategy to formalise the lessons learnt from this. He committed to making the virtual public meeting accessible to disabled participants and stated that people with an interest in this issue would be able to participate and that he would be willing to postpone the meeting for a couple of weeks to ensure it was carried out in the right way. He advised Members that the Council was willing to consider installing a temporary ramp for events at other times of the year, although the costs would need to be taken into account. He reported that costings had not been worked out for the permanent options as none of them had proved workable. He informed the Committee that the Council was committed to providing a temporary ramp each year for the anniversary, despite the costs, due to the errors it had made in relation to the Memorial. The Development Manager reported that he did not have costings for either the permanent options or the temporary ramp but that the cost of the temporary ramp was likely to be lower.

Decision

To ask officers and the Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure to change the date of the public meeting in order to give more time to ensuring that it is carried out in the correct way and that the meeting be an open, accessible forum for the consideration of a limited number of options, including the most recent proposal from the campaign groups and the Council's proposal for a temporary ramp.

CESC/20/43 Domestic Violence and Abuse - Update

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which provided a response to Members' questions about specific aspects of domestic violence and abuse response as well as a general update on progress across the agenda, including COVID-19 response and recovery work.

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

- COVID-19 response and recovery;
- Domestic abuse and accommodation;
- Priority Move On Project;
- Domestic Abuse Sanctuary Scheme;
- Operation Encompass;
- LGBT IDVA service provision;
- Workplace domestic abuse policies;
- Review of Domestic Abuse Strategy and commissioning arrangements; and
- Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews.

Barbara Guest from Independent Choices informed the Committee about the history of her organisation and about the services it currently provided, including the Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse helpline, which included support in community languages, and a service which provided casework and support to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) victims of domestic abuse who were at moderate or high risk of harm. She outlined some of the challenges that the pandemic had created for domestic abuse support services and for victims of domestic abuse. She reported that Independent Choices had needed to find a way to deliver its service via home-working, which had involved buying additional equipment and diverting its helpline to a mobile phone system. She also reported that face-to-face support and meetings had been replaced with telephone, email and messaging contact and online meetings. She advised, that in some cases, such as Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, holding meetings online had worked well and that this might be something that could continue to be used. She also outlined the impact on staffing capacity, as the service had been unable to use its trained volunteers and this had placed increase pressure on its paid staff, although she reported that the service had been able to obtain a limited amount of extra funding to increase capacity. She reported that, because the sector was stretched at the moment, this had affected its ability to do other work, such as strategic work and fundraising. She reported that, during lockdown, domestic abuse victims had been confined to their home with the perpetrator and been less able to access support. She reported that the sector had responded to this by using a range of methods to publicise the support available to victims and to enable them to make contact, including increased social media

campaigns and changing the non-urgent email service to an urgent support email service, which victims could access at any time. She also informed Members of the impact of lockdown on the service's LGBT clients, as other sources of support for them were unavailable, and reported that her service had provided additional support.

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

- Request for information on the availability of refuge beds;
- What lessons had been learnt from the Domestic Homicide Reviews;
- Installations of additional security measures in homes and the timescale for completing this;
- How many people were attending hospitals or GP surgeries in relation to domestic abuse;
- Operation Encompass and schools' take-up of training on domestic abuse;
- Support for older victims of domestic abuse; and
- The number of people who were reporting domestic abuse to Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and how repeated incidents were dealt with.

The Community Safety Lead informed Members that her service was regularly collecting data to identify pressure points for domestic abuse services and where additional resources were needed. She reported that the domestic abuse support organisations had responded flexibly to changing circumstances during the pandemic. She also offered to share with Members the briefings which had come out of the Domestic Homicide Reviews.

The Domestic Abuse Reduction Manager reported that since 8 June 2020, following a period where staff had been furloughed due to COVID-19, the Safe Partnership's installers had fitted additional security measures in 10 homes. She advised that the timescale for carrying this out was generally 24 to 48 hours. She reported that these figures did not represent the total number of security installations carried out as some of the bigger housing providers arranged this themselves. She informed Members that, while she did not have data for hospitals, all GP surgeries across the city had been trained in identifying domestic abuse through the Iris Project and that in quarter 1 of 2020 160 people, mainly women, had been directly referred to the Iris Project and in Quarter 2 189 people had been referred. She advised that this was a slight reduction on the previous year which was likely to be due to fewer people attending their GP surgery during the pandemic. She reported that regular briefings and information were being sent to Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools through the Council's Quality Assurance Team and she advised that e-learning training on domestic abuse had recently been offered to schools and that the take-up so far had been positive.

Councillor Doswell reported that she and a group of female backbench Councillors had been doing some work in relation to this issue and she asked whether this group could input into the review of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and whether they could receive an update on the timeline for the review. The Community Safety Lead agreed to this and advised that she would ask the team undertaking the review to get in touch.

The Community Safety Lead acknowledged that access to domestic abuse support services for older people was an area of concern, for example, whether online services were less accessible to some older people, and that this was being looked at and would also be considered as part of the review of domestic abuse services. Barbara Guest reported that her service received calls from older people who were victims of domestic abuse and from friends or family who were concerned about them; however, she advised that nationally evidence suggested that a lot of domestic abuse involving older people was hidden and reported as elder abuse, which could then go through a different process involving Adult Social Care, rather than domestic abuse services.

The Domestic Abuse Reduction Manager explained how disclosures of domestic abuse to GMP were dealt with, with cases being risk assessed and the approach taken and agencies involved being dependent on whether the risk was deemed to be standard, medium or high.

Barbara Guest informed the Committee about the media campaign that Independent Choices would be running during the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence and asked whether Members could share the videos, to which the Chair agreed.

The Deputy Leader thanked officers and external partners working in this area for their hard work during this challenging time. The Chair echoed these thanks. He thanked Barbara Guest and the officers for attending the meeting and invited them to contact him if there was any other support the Committee could provide.

Decisions

1. To ask for a note on the availability of refuge beds to be circulated to Committee Members.
2. To note that the Community Safety Lead will share with Members the briefings which have come out of the Domestic Homicide Reviews.
3. To note that Barbara Guest will provide Members with Independent Choices' social media details so that Members can share the videos they put out during the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

CESC/20/44 Update on COVID-19 Activity

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which provided a further update summary of the current situation in the city in relation to COVID-19 and an update on the work progressing in Manchester in relation to areas within the remit of this Committee.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- The impact and challenges relating to residents at risk, community resilience and equality and inclusion; and
- Key planning and recovery activity being undertaken in relation to these areas.

The Head of Neighbourhoods provided the Committee with a further update, as England had entered a new lockdown period since the report was published. She outlined the support that was being made available to people who were clinically extremely vulnerable, while stating that shielding would not be in place in the way it had been during the first lockdown. The Chair commented that a briefing for Members was taking place that evening,

In response to a Member's question, the Head of Neighbourhoods advised Members that the letter being sent from the national Government to people classed as clinically extremely vulnerable informed them that they should contact their local authority if they needed help while the letter from the Council provided them with local information, including details of the Council's helpline. She reported that conversations were taking place with local disabled people's organisations in Manchester about providing information and support to people who did not fall within the clinically extremely vulnerable category but who might still need support.

In response to a Member's question on payments for people who were instructed to self-isolate by the Test and Trace Service, the Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing reported that these were being processed as quickly as possible, although there might be a lag in the recording of the payments.

Decision

To note the report.

[Councillor Rawlins declared a personal interest as a trustee of a foodbank.]

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

CESC/20/46 Neighbourhoods Directorate 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 (Neighbourhoods) which estimated that the Council would have a budget gap of £105m in 2021/22 increasing to c £159m in 2022/23 and stated that all Directorates had been seeking to identify savings options for consideration by Members. The report set out the details of the initial savings options proposed by officers for the Neighbourhoods Directorate.

The main points and themes within the report included: -

- Background and context;
- The Directorate's current budget position and in-year forecast;
- Savings options for 2021/22 onwards;
- Further considerations;
- Workforce implications; and
- Equalities.

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: -

- That the Council was in a very difficult financial position and that more funding was needed from the national Government but that, in the absence of this, difficult decisions had to be made to set a balanced budget;
- Whether the savings set out in the report in relation to parks were achievable and how they would be made;
- Concern about the costs of maintaining leisure centres and providing funding to Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) during the pandemic, possible ongoing subsidies to GLL and whether any of this money could be recouped from the Government;
- That the Council should only be supporting private companies such as GLL as much as was necessary, for example, to prevent them going out of business where that would be more costly to the Council, as this had to be considered against other priorities such as preventing homelessness, and that, in the current climate, the Council needed to prepare for the possibility that a company the Council had outsourced services to could go out of business;
- Concern about the potential impact on the income budget of ongoing restrictions related to COVID-19 and what steps were being taken in relation

to that, including quantifying the amounts and identifying possible further savings;

- That Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) should be carried out at the earliest appropriate time and used to inform decision-making and that this should be more clearly set out in reports;
- To ask that the next report on the budget proposals include information on what the Council's statutory obligations were, to enable Members to see where cuts could be made without breaching those obligations; and
- That the Executive should take into account the possible unintended consequences of the Council's budget decisions on partners, including the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector.

The Head of Parks, Leisure, Youth and Events reported that £12 million capital investment had previously been allocated to invest in parks to help generate income streams from parks and to reduce their operating costs. He advised that income from parks had been increased by about 40% over the past four years and he stated that his service was confident that the income targets were achievable, although he acknowledged that any restrictions on trading which lasted into next spring and summer represented a risk to this. He reported that previously the intention had been to re-invest this additional income to improve parks but now it was proposed that this money would be used to balance the Council's budget and maintain parks at their current standard. A Member requested that details of the proposed investment programme for parks be included in a future report to the Committee on the Parks Strategy.

The Head of Parks, Leisure, Youth and Events informed Members that the Council had made representations to the Government about the need to provide funding to the leisure sector during the pandemic. He informed Members that a funding package had been provided to councils with in-house leisure services but councils which had outsourced their leisure services were not eligible for this; however, he reported that the Government had in the previous week announced a £100 million fund which local authorities could bid for and the Council would be submitting a bid to that fund to try to secure the maximum amount possible to try to ameliorate the additional costs. He advised the Committee that further funding announcements were expected.

The Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) drew Members' attention to section 4.3 of the Budget Options report which detailed the impact of COVID-19 on the Directorate's income. She advised the Committee that this had been taken into account in the in-year budget management, that mitigation was in place for £1.7 million and a number of further options were being looked at, including securing more money from the national Government.

In response to a Member's question about Manchester Fayre, the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) advised that this had been discussed at the most recent meeting of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee, whose remit it fell within, and that the Executive would be taking a decision about this at its December meeting.

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 request that details of the proposed investment programme for parks be included in a future report to the Committee on the Parks Strategy.
3. To ask that the next report on the budget proposals include information on the Council's statutory obligations in relation to the areas where cuts are being proposed.

[Councillor Rawlins declared a personal interest as a Director of the Forum Trust.]

CESC/20/47 Overview Report

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

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme.