

Executive

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 9 December 2020

Present: Councillor Leese (Chair)

Councillors: Akbar, Bridges, Craig, N Murphy, Rahman, Stogia, and Richards

Also present as Members of the Standing Consultative Panel:

Councillors: Karney, Leech, M Sharif Mahamed, Sheikh, Midgley, Ilyas, Taylor and S Judge

Apologies: Councillor Ollerhead

Exe/20/131 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 11 November 2020.

Exe/20/132 COVID 19 Monthly Update Report

The written report from the Chief Executive took the form of three “situation reports”, one each for the work on the city’s economic recovery, work with residents and communities, and work on the future of the Council itself. The written report was noted. The report also included an updated version of Manchester’s 12 Point COVID-19 Action Plan which had been brought up to date to include references to mass-testing and to the vaccination roll-out arrangements.

At the meeting the Executive Member, Councillor Craig, gave a brief update on significant and changing developments in recent weeks. The number of cases in Manchester was currently down to 164 cases per 100,000. The rate in the over 60’s was 189 per 100,000 and was likewise decreasing. Admissions to hospitals in the city were also declining and although the average length of a stay in hospital was increasing that was a result of more patients surviving their infection, so was a positive sign. However, the overall pressures on the hospitals remained very high.

The Executive Member also advised residents of Manchester to continue to be cautious over the Christmas period. The government’s restrictions on social mixing were being relaxed and eased to allow more families to mix and spend time together indoors over the Christmas period, in larger groups and from multiple households. However, the way everyone behaved in the five days when the restrictions were relaxed could prove to be crucial to preventing a further a rise in infections and hospital admissions in early January.

She also described the arrangement that were being put in place to allow family members to resume visiting the residents of care homes. That would be allowed

where people have received a negative result from both a PCR Test up to three days before a visit, and a Lateral Flow Test on the day of the visit. It was felt that those arrangements would allow visits to resume safely. Lastly, she said that vaccinations were to begin within days at Manchester hospitals, with community vaccination starting the following week.

The Director of Public Health then reported on the planning that was underway for the city's programme for targeted testing at scale, and the help of the military with the logistics of the programme. Early in 2021 there would be the start of community testing to detect asymptomatic case in those parts of the city where infections rates were the highest, learning from the pilot testing in Liverpool and the experiences of the universities and the mass testing of students to allow them to return home at Christmas.

Decision

To note the report.

Exe/20/133 Spending Review Announcement

Following the Chancellor's statement to the House of Commons on 25 November, the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer set out the announcements in the Government's Spending Review that related to local government funding, and the potential impact of those overall announcements on the council's finances in the next year. The actual levels of funding for the council in 2021/22 were not yet known and were expected to be announced mid to late December. The announcements made by the Chancellor were anticipated to provide an extra £8m to £9m support for adult social care and £40m to £50m in other measures. If confirmed in December, those would be sufficient to remove the need to identify further cuts for 2021/2 beyond the approximately £50m of cuts and savings identified in the reports considered in November (Minutes Exe/20/117 to Exe/20/123).

The report set out the details of each elements of funding that the Chancellor had announced, as well as the implications of the partial public-sector pay freeze that had also been announced.

Decision

To note the report.

Exe/20/134 Revenue Budget Monitoring to the end of October 2020

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer presented a review of the 2020/21 revenue budgets. The report provided an overview of the Council's financial position as at the end of October 2020 and the work to develop a balanced budget for 2020/21. The report projected a balanced budget outturn for 2020/21, a further improvement on the forecast deficit that had been reported in October (Minute Exe/20/104). That new forecast was based on the financial implications of COVID-19,

budget revisions through the year and additional government funding confirmed to date. The overall revenue forecast for 2020/21 was now:

Forecast as at 31 October 2020	Original Approved Budget £000	Revised Budget £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Total Forecast Variance £000
Total Available Resources	(666,125)	(846,898)	(832,997)	13,901
Total Corporate Budgets	126,761	258,851	257,019	(1,832)
Children's Services	130,320	134,728	132,811	(1,917)
Adult Social Care	221,253	232,247	238,968	6,721
Homelessness	15,285	17,604	22,771	5,167
Corporate Core	69,958	91,354	93,178	1,824
Neighbourhoods	93,802	100,842	109,517	8,675
Growth and Development	8,746	11,272	15,079	3,807
Total Directorate Budgets	539,364	588,047	612,324	24,277
Total Use of Resources	666,125	846,898	869,343	22,445
Total forecast over / (under) spend	0	0	36,346	36,346
COVID 19 Government grant income (tranche 1 to 4) - Confirmed				(64,782)
COVID 19 Sales, fees and Charges grant income – Forecast				(6,400)
Re-profile the use of reserves				34,836
Net forecast over / (under) spend				0

The report also addressed a number of specific changes and approvals needed as part of the Council's budget revisions processes in 2020/21.

Grants in Addition to that Already Planned

The report explained that notifications had been received in relation to specific external grants as additional funds for the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as two grants for other purposes. These allocations had not been confirmed at the time of the 2020/21 budget setting processes, so confirmation of them was now being sought. These were all supported:

- £24.330m as tranche four emergency COVID-19 funding for the council's ongoing work to support communities during the pandemic.
- £3.7m as a further sales, fees and charges grant, the support package for losses from sales, fees and charges.

- £4.423m for the Contain Outbreak Management Fund to fund activities such as enforcement, compliance and contact tracing, being £8 per head of the city's population.
- £286,000 for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people to provide food and support to the most at risk so as to enable them to stay at home as much as possible over the 28 national "lock-down" in November and early December 2020.
- £2.581m for the Holiday Activities and Food programme to support families and the most vulnerable over winter for provision of food during school holidays for children who normally would have access to a free school meal.
- £390,000 for cultural recovery, the first payment of £0.780m awarded to Manchester Art Gallery as a qualifying organisation that was severely financially impacted by COVID 19.
- £454,000 for rough sleepers Protect Programme to provide further accommodation for entrenched rough sleepers who are very complex in nature and will include Mental Health and Drugs/Alcohol misuse support.
- £65,000 for the Wellbeing for education return to provide training and support on specific mental health areas.
- £360,000 for Safer Streets Funding for interventions that will impact on the acquisitive crime including targeted hardening improvements to individual properties.

Budget to be Allocated

When setting the 2020/21 budget the Council has agreed to hold some funds for contingencies, and other money that was to be allocated throughout the year. The report proposed one further use of some of these budgets to be allocated. This was agreed:

- £99,000 for the Street Lighting PFI contract to fund the annual inflation increase on the PFI unitary payments.

Budget Virements

The report also proposed two budget virements, both of which would need to be approved by the Council. Those were both supported.

Decisions

1. To note the global revenue monitoring report and a forecast outturn position of a breakeven position.
2. To approve additional COVID-19 grants, and other unbudgeted external grant funding, to be reflected in the budget as set out above.
3. To approve the use of budgets to be allocated as set out above.
4. To recommend to the Council the approval of a proposed budget transfer of £1m from Corporate Core directorate to Collection Fund to offset council tax discounts (funded through the specific Hardship Fund grant); and also approve a £375k transfer within Adults Social Care for the Impower savings delivery partnership.

Exe/20/135 Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040

A report submitted by the Strategic Director (Growth and Development) sought the endorsement of the refreshed Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, as well as the final version of a Five-Year Delivery Plan. The report also sought approval for the publication of a Local Implementation Plan for Manchester.

The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 had first been published in February 2017 as the city-region's statutory transport plan. Since then the steps that need to be taken to achieve the vision set out in the document had evolved significantly. It had therefore been brought up to date to make reference to:

- the "Right-Mix" ambition for at least 50% of all journeys to be made by active travel and public transport by 2040;
- details of the GM Mayor's 'Our Network' plan to create an integrated, modern and accessible transport network;
- an increased emphasis on the importance of cycling and walking;
- the climate emergency declared by GMCA and all ten councils;
- the development of the GM Clean Air Plan;
- the contemporary devolution agenda, including publication of the Bus Reform business case and GM Rail Prospectus;
- ongoing work to develop our 2040 sub-strategies including Streets for All, City Centre Transport Strategy, Local Bus Strategy, Rapid Transit Strategy, and Freight Strategy; and
- the development of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.

Along with the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, the GMCA was to publish "Our Five-Year Delivery Plan" to set out the practical actions planned to deliver the 2040 Transport Strategy and the transport ambitions of the GMCA and the Mayor. The "Our Five-Year Delivery Plan" was itself supported by ten Local Implementation Plans (LIPs) covering the period 2020 to 2025, one for each of the council district in Greater Manchester. The latest version of the Manchester LIP was appended to the report.

Decisions

1. To endorse the refreshed Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and the final version of Our Five-Year Delivery Plan for approval by GMCA and publication in December 2020, alongside GMSF.
2. To approve the publication of the supporting Local Implementation Plan for Manchester as an appendix to Our Five-Year Delivery Plan, acknowledging that these are "live" documents and will be subject to regular review and update as appropriate.
3. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Growth and Development) in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport to approve any subsequent updates to the Local Implementation Plan for Manchester.

Exe/20/136 HS2 Phase 2b Western Leg Design Refinement Consultation Response

This report submitted by the Strategic Director (Growth and Development) explained that the Council had been consulted as part of a Design Refinement Consultation (DRC) being carried out by HS2 Ltd. on the western leg of Phase 2b of HS2 (Manchester-Crewe). The consultation was seeking the Council's views on updates to station designs at both Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport, a route alignment change, and the integration of Northern Powerhouse Rail at both Piccadilly and Manchester Airport high speed stations with proposals for extra platforms at both those stations.

The report set out in detail a proposed response to the consultation, with a copy of the draft response appended to the report. The full draft response was endorsed, with authority delegated to finalise the document and submit it to HS2 Ltd.

It was noted that the Economy Scrutiny Committee had also considered the report and had endorsed its recommendations (Minute ESC/20/48).

Decisions

1. To note the proposed refinements within Manchester in the HS2 Design Refinement Consultation.
2. To note and comment on the City Council's draft submission in response to the consultation.
3. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Growth & Development), in consultation with the Leader and Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport, to finalise the response and submit to HS2 Ltd.

Exe/20/137 Purpose Built Student Accommodation

Manchester has one of the largest student populations in Europe, with over 90,000 students at Greater Manchester's five universities, and over 380,000 students at the 22 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) within an hour's drive.

Policy H12 of the city's Core Strategy was adopted in 2012 and had been developed with the objective of managing the supply of student accommodation in the city. It set out the criteria to be used to guide planning applications for student accommodation and to manage the appropriate delivery of Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA). The policy had helped ensure that housing had been developed in the city centre, prevented an oversupply of PBSA, and created a dynamic residential market. The Council, working with partners, had used Policy H12 to manage the controlled delivery of a limited but sustainable supply of new PBSA, in response to increasing student demand for accommodation in the city centre. A small amount of PBSA has also been developed in the south of the city, including the University of Manchester's

plans in Fallowfield. Whilst Policy H12 remained relevant, changes in the student accommodation market had created the need to review the interpretation and application of the policy. This primarily related to affordability challenges and the need to locate accommodation close to the higher education institutions.

To that end, in November 2019 the Strategic Director (Growth & Development) had been asked to undertake an appropriate consultation with key stakeholders on this changing context for purpose built student accommodation, and to report back on the outcomes of the consultation (Minute/Exe/19/95).

The report now submitted by the Strategic Director set out the outcome of that consultation. The consultation had been undertaken in two phases: phase 1 up to March 2020 had been with developers, students and higher education establishments; phase 2 up to May 2020 with residents and business as part of the local plan review. There had then been the opportunity for further consideration and discussions with local ward councillors within the Council (Minute Exe/20/107).

For phase 1 there were 85 respondents: six from property developers; three from higher education establishments; and 76 from students, including representation from the Manchester Metropolitan University Student Union. The report described in detail the range of issues that these consultees had raised in their responses.

For phase 2 there were 561 respondents overall to the Local Plan consultation, although not all had commented on the purpose built student accommodation statement. Most of those responses were from residents. For the residents who responded on the question of purpose built student accommodation there was significant opposition to the conversion of existing family homes into shared living arrangements for students, and support for a range of good quality, affordable accommodation.

The report then set out a detailed responses to the matters that had been raised by the respondents. It also considered the implication of the COVID-19 pandemic on future provision and development of such accommodation. Any new schemes that were considered under the approach being recommended in the report would not be ready for occupation until 2023 at the earliest, and by then it was anticipated that the city would have recovered from the pandemic with a sense of normality returned. So it was felt that demand for student accommodation would not be affected by the pandemic in the longer term.

Decisions

1. To note the outcome of the consultation exercise with key stakeholders on purpose built student accommodation.
2. To endorse the approach set out in the report to help guide the decision making process in advance of the review of the Local Plan and request the Planning and Highways Committee take this approach into material consideration until the Local Plan has been reviewed.

Exe/20/138 Withdrawal from school catering provider market

The report of the Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods explained the current financial and operating position of Manchester Fayre, the council-operated catering services that provided food to 80 sites across the City, nearly all of which were schools. The report outlined the forecast cost of the service in the current year and the additional budget requirement that would be needed to continue operating the service in the future. The report set out the background to Manchester Fayre operation and described the current operations and budget positions

It was explained that the Council was not required to provide a school meals service and the majority of schools in the city had already made their own arrangements with other companies, or were providing meals in-house. In the future, the subsidy required to continue to operate the service to a minority of Manchester schools would be significant, requiring budget cuts in other services. It was felt that the market for school meal providers in Manchester was competitive and that alternative providers could service the demand without the subsidy that would otherwise be required for Manchester Fayre.

The report examined the options of increasing the charges for the meals provided but concluded that would most likely see even more schools leaving the service. It also considered the closing the service and helping the schools to make new arrangements. It considered the implications for the current employees if the service was to transfer to a new provider or be taken over by the individual schools. The report concluded by recommending the withdrawal of Manchester Fayre from the school meal provider market by no later than September 2021. At the meeting officers reported that discussions would take place with three other providers that might be in a position to take the service over from the Council.

It was noted that the report had also been considered by the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee at a recent meeting (Minute RGSC/20/56). The Committee had recommended that the Executive do not progress the changes being proposed in the report and instead consider alternative options. Having considered the officer's report and the advice of the Committee, it was agreed that changes should be made so that the service would not require financial subsidy and support by the Council in the future, and to explore the alternative options for the future of the service, including withdrawal by September 2021.

Decisions

1. To approve the withdrawal of Manchester Fayre from the school meal provider market by no later than September 2021.
2. To agree that the potential to assign the current Service Level Agreements held by Manchester Fayre to an independent provider be progressed.
3. To explore the extent by which the Council can work with other GM local authorities to continue to maintain a service.

4. To establish clearly what would be needed to make the Council's existing service financially viable.

Exe/20/139 Amendment to Hackney Carriage Fare Card

Manchester Airport Group (MAG) had amended the charging structure for the drop off zones at the airport terminals. Any charges imposed on Hackney Carriages by a third party (i.e. barrier charges to access a rank) can only be recovered on the Hackney Carriage meter if they are indicated on the published Fare Card (following a public consultation). Tariffs have to be indicated specifically on the card to ensure the customer understands the legal applicable charges on the meter, therefore the fare card has to be amended each time any third-party charge changes.

In its capacity as advisor to the Executive on hackney carriage fares, the Licensing and Appeals Committee considered a report at its meeting on 30 November 2020, which set out a proposal to amend the current Hackney Carriage Fare Card in relation to increased charges the Hackney Carriage Trade are subject to at the airport (Minute LAP/20/6). The Committee was recommending that the increase in charges made by the airport be added to the fare card so that drivers could recover that from their passengers and not have to carry that cost themselves. That proposal was accepted.

Decision

To approve the recommendation of the Licensing and Appeals Committee amend the Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff Extra - 'Manchester Airport Charge - Drop off at any terminal' from £1.80 to £3.

Exe/20/140 Children's COVID Winter Grant

Manchester had been allocated £2.581m as a COVID winter grant. A minimum of 80% of this grant had to be spent on families with children. The grant covers the period from 1 December 2020 to 31 March 2021. A report from the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services put forward proposals for this allocation of this grant funding to expenditure budgets, with the majority of the money to be used to support food provision for around 43,000 children and young people over the Christmas holidays and February half term holiday, when they would otherwise not have access to meals at their school.

The main proposal was for £1.9m to be used to pay for supermarket vouchers to be distributed through schools so as to allow families to buy food over the holiday periods. The balance of the money would be used for a range of other schemes to help children, families and young people in challenging circumstances over the winter period. The proposals in the report were all supported and welcomed.

Decisions

1. To note the contents of this report and the urgent time frame to provide food provision to Manchester children.
2. To agree that the allocation of the grant would support the following priorities:
 - £1.9m to be allocated to provide supermarket vouchers to be distributed through schools and settings for children and young people eligible for benefit related free school meals and other children in identified groups.
 - Up to £150k to be allocated as a grant to Colleges in Manchester to enable them to develop a scheme for young people who were previously on FSM.
 - £24.5k to be allocated for to support care leavers with food.
 - £264k to be allocated to Early Years/Early Help service to support children and families experiencing poverty.
 - £132k to be allocated to Food Response team for adult only households.
3. To delegate the administration and final allocation of the funds to the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer in consultation with the Director of Children's Services.
4. To note that the decisions proposed in this report have not been on the record of key decisions for 28 days or more and that therefore the special urgency exemption is being relied upon with the consent of the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.
5. To note that the City Solicitor has advised that the decisions proposed in this report are urgent.
6. To note that the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has agreed that these decisions are reasonable in all the circumstances and to them being treated as a matter of urgency as any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the interests of the residents of Manchester, and therefore are not subject to call-in.