

## **Economy Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 27 May 2021**

#### **Present:**

Councillor H Priest – in the Chair

Councillors Doswell, Farrell, Johns, Noor and Stanton

#### **Also present:**

Councillor Leese, Leader

Councillor White, Executive Member for Housing and Employment

**Apologies:** Councillor Baker-Smith, Bayunu, Moore and Raikes

#### **ESC/21/23 Minutes**

##### **Decision**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2021 were approved as a correct record.

#### **ESC/21/24 Economy COVID-19 Sit Rep Report**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of City Centre Growth and Infrastructure that provided Members with 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.

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

- Were there plans in place to build upon the reported Post Pandemic Business Activity event that had been scheduled for 12 May 2021;
- Suggesting that some of the initiatives introduced as a result of the pandemic, such as the pedestrianisation of specific streets should be made permanent;
- What were the factors contributing to the reported high staff vacancy rates across the hospitality sector;
- Clarification was sought in relation to the planned Transport Hub identified for delivery in the Ancoats area, noting that there appeared to be a lot of misinformation relating to this scheme being circulated;
- Implications of the Queen's Speech in regard to local Planning controls;
- Had appropriate communication with local businesses been undertaken to ensure that they accessed all available support grants during the pandemic; and
- Was there a commitment that local people would benefit from the job opportunities that were created through the delivery of the Co Op Live development in east Manchester.

The Head of Environment, Planning and Infrastructure stated that the delivery of the Ancoats Mobility Hub was aligned to, and an element of, the City Centre Transport

Strategy and contributed to the delivery of Manchester's climate, transport and clean air commitments.

The Director of Inclusive Economy advised the Members that the delivery of the Co Op Live development would deliver employment opportunities for local residents and the developers would be attending a local recruitment event in July to promote this to promote this. In response to the question regarding the hospitality sector contributing factors were Brexit, some people finding alternative employment while venues have been closed, and a reduction in the number of students in the city as a result of the pandemic. She stated that work was underway to understand and assess the impact of these factors. She stated that influence was sought over the hospitality sector to improve terms and conditions with such initiatives as the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.

The Director of Inclusive Economy stated that direct contact had been made with local business to ensure that they accessed all means of grant support and local discretionary schemes available during the pandemic, adding this had been undertaken by telephone and letter using the information available on the Business Rates system and these contacts were followed up. In reply to a specific question relating to ESF 'Step Ahead' grants, the Director stated that she would circulate this information following the meeting.

The Leader stated that following the ending of the emergency legislation introduced in response to the pandemic, consideration would be given to making permanent some of the changes to remove traffic from streets and parking arrangements, adding that these would be subject to appropriate consultation. In response to the question regarding planning and the recent announcements in the Queen's speech, the Leader stated that Manchester would continue to retain influence and control over future developments across the city.

## **Decision**

The Committee note the report.

## **ESC/21/25 Economy Dashboard 2019/20 - Introduction to new Members**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Performance, Research and Intelligence that provided the most up to date metrics on key aspects of the City's economic recovery.

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

- A contributing factor to the decline in property sales in the city centre could be attributed to the issue of external cladding;
- With regard to the journeys undertaken metrics, was data available for private vehicles; and
- Noting the number of licenses that had been provided to businesses in Manchester allowing them to increase outdoor seating in line with the latest Covid-19 protocols what would happen to these post Covid-19.

The Head of Performance, Research and Intelligence stated that there was a pipeline of schemes designed to deliver and support active travel and transport infrastructure.

The Leader stated that when the emergency legislation was lifted consideration could be given to businesses wishing to continue operating outdoor seating using the existing licensing regime. He further commented that Transport for Greater Manchester did compile data on the various vehicle usage, adding that the reported increased use of public transport was a positive indicator.

### **Decision**

The Committee note the report.

[Cllr Johns declared a personal and non prejudicial interest in this item of business as he is an occupant of a property affected by the external cladding and fire safety issue.]

### **ESC/21/26 Overview Report**

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

The Committee noted that it would be discussing the work programme for the forthcoming municipal year in further detail in a private session following the meeting, and that an updated work programme reflecting this discussion would be circulated as normal in the papers for the next meeting.

### **Decision**

The Committee note the report.

### **ESC/21/27 Exclusion of Press and Public**

### **Decision**

To exclude the public during consideration of the following item which involved consideration of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of particular persons and public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

### **ESC/21/28 Scrutiny Committees' work on cross-cutting themes of the Our Manchester Strategy**

The Committee considered the report of Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that provided an overview of how cross-cutting themes in the *Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025* reset document were covered by MCC Scrutiny Committees during the 2021/22 municipal year.

*Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025* had reset Manchester’s priorities for the next five years to ensure we could achieve the city’s ambitions set out in the *Our Manchester Strategy 2016 – 2025*.

**Decision**

The Committee note the report