

Executive

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 30 June 2021

Present: Councillor Leese (Chair)

Councillors: Bridges, Craig, Midgley, Rahman, Rawlins, White

Also present as Members of the Standing Consultative Panel:

Councillors: Karney, M Sharif Mahamed, Ilyas and Taylor

Apologies: Councillor Akbar

Exe/21/61 Minutes

Decision

The Executive approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 2 June 2021.

Exe/21/62 Covid 19 update

The Executive considered a report of the Chief Executive and Director of Public Health, which provided an update on the COVID-19 situation within the city and the development of the Enhanced Response Area (ERA) Action Plan.

The Executive Member for Health and Care reported that Manchester now had the third highest rate of infections in the country (453 people per 100,000) and it was expected that rates would continue to increase as a result of the Delta variant. She reported that on 8 June 2021, Manchester along with the rest of Greater Manchester and parts of Lancashire were designated as an 'Enhanced Response Area'. This designation built on the experience of Bolton, who had seen a sharp increase in Delta variant cases from the beginning of May and over the past few months had implemented surge vaccination plans and widespread community testing which had helped to bring rates down in the borough.

Manchester had already been working on a targeted Variants of Concern Action Plan with a focus on particular parts of the city. This plan had now evolved into the ERA action plan. The action plan would be implemented over a four week period up to the final stage of the road map on Monday 19 July 2021. The plan incorporated five key workstreams:-

- Targeted vaccination drive;
- Targeted communications and engagement;
- Identifying and breaking chains of transmission (testing, contact tracing and support to self isolate);
- Additional control measures; and
- Mitigating the risk of transmission in Universities.

The Executive Member for Health and Care also reported that 331,000 people in Manchester had now had their first vaccination and 207,000 people had had their second vaccination. She wished to place on record her thanks to all Council staff, health partners and volunteers who had been involved in the vaccination roll out across the city. She highlighted that the recently published Marmot report into health inequalities had highlighted that there had been a 25% higher COVID mortality rate in Greater Manchester which had led to a "jaw-dropping" fall in life-expectancy in the North West with contributing factors identified in the report being "regressive" cuts to public funding since 2010, as poorer areas and those areas outside London and the South experienced proportionately larger cuts.

The Executive Member for Children's Services commented that the findings of the Marmot report had also exposed inequalities in support available to families impacted by COVID. He reported that whilst Government had only very recently announced some further additional funding to support the provision of free school meals during the summer holidays, it had not been enough. He advised that Manchester would not let any of its children miss out on this provision and as such the Council once again would provide additional investment to make this available to every child (who qualified for free school meals in term time) during the summer holidays.

Councillor Karney commented that the Marmot report had also highlighted that half of the city's wards were in the top 10% of deprivation within the country, which had impacted on many Manchester residents and their ability to deal with the pandemic due to economic inequalities. He called on the new Health Secretary to respond to the Marmot report in advance of the proposed public inquiry into the Government's response to the pandemic.

The Leader noted that the impact on deprived communities had been a consistent theme of the pandemic, with Government's response being "inequality blind". He referenced that improving population health and addressing health inequalities lay at the core of the Our Manchester Strategy and urged Government to listen to the outcome of the Marmot report and take real action in its commitment to helping the Manchester region "build back fairer".

Decisions

The Executive:-

- (1) Note the update.
- (2) Support the Enhanced Response Area Action Plan.
- (3) Place on record its thanks to all Council staff, health partners and volunteers who have been involved in the vaccination roll out across the city.

Exe/21/63 Our Manchester Progress Update

The Executive considered a report of the Chief Executive, which provided an update on key areas of progress against the Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025

which reset Manchester's priorities for the next five years to ensure the Council could still achieve the city's ambition set out in the Our Manchester Strategy 2016 – 2025.

The Executive Member for Environment highlighted the work that was being undertaken as part of the Council's commitment to the city becoming zero carbon by 2038, citing the introduction of three neighbourhood climate change officers to help communities across Manchester reduce their carbon footprints.

The Executive Member for Housing and Employment highlighted the investment the Council continued to make in its social housing stock and commitment to delivering more affordable homes, reporting that the Council was on track to deliver 7,775 affordable homes by 2025 against a target of 6,400.

The Chief Executive also commented on the Council's continued commitment to apprenticeships against the backdrop of a 47% reduction in apprenticeship offers nationally due to the impact of Covid19.

Decision

The Executive note the update.

Exe/21/64 Capital Programme Outturn 2020/21

The Executive considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, which informed Members of the of the capital outturn position for 2020/21 including total expenditure and funding. The report confirmed that funding sources had been managed to best utilise resources available to fund the capital programme. A revised capital programme for the 2021/22 financial year after taking into account the final outturn position was also reported.

The main changes to the programme since the report to Executive in February 2021 were as follows:-

- Highways – £1.4m to be moved into 2021/22 to be used against the future programme due to evening and weekend work not required due to the quiet road network;
- Neighbourhoods – £5.1m to be reprofiled into next financial year for the delivery of six Electric Refuse Collection vehicles;
- Strategic Development – £6.7m into future years reprofiled into future years due to negotiations on the finer details of certain clauses within the Northern Gateway project taking longer than anticipated;
- Our Town Hall Project – £4.6m to be reprofiled into next financial year due to unspent contingency in 2020/21 and a number of work packages starting on site later than originally anticipated;
- Public Sector Housing - £1.5m across the Northwards Programme to be accelerated into 2020-21 due to better progress being achieved than originally anticipated; and
- SEN programme – £1.5m to be reprofiled into next financial year due to the contractor for the Roundwood Road project overestimating their spend profile in the early stages of the works and setbacks due to COVID19.

The final spend position for the Capital Programme in 2020/21 was £335.7m compared to a revised budget of £373.3m.

The Deputy Leader (Finance) commented that whilst the outturn position for the 2020/21 financial year was relatively high when compared to the average outturn of £266m over the past three years, this represented the continued significant investment in Manchester with over 220 live projects progressing during the year, a major achievement given the impact of the pandemic.

The Deputy Leader (Finance) also commented on the focus within every capital programme project on social value and delivering benefits for Manchester people, in terms of job creation, apprenticeship opportunities and provision of affordable homes.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer supported the comments made by the Deputy Leader (Finance) and highlighted the ambitious capital programme for 2021/22 with a proposed budget of approximately £480m.

Decisions

The Executive:-

- (1) Recommend that the Council approve the virements over £0.5m between capital schemes to maximise use of funding resources available to the City Council set out in Appendix B.
- (2) Note the outturn of capital expenditure 2020/21 was £335.7m.
- (3) Note the changes to the outturn attributable to movement in the programme that occurred after the previous monitoring report to Executive in February 2021.
- (4) Approve virements under £0.5m within the capital programme as outlined in Appendix B.
- (5) Note the decisions of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer regarding the funding of capital expenditure in 2020/21 including the use of £98.8m Grants and Contributions, £21.4m Capital receipts, £34.7m Revenue funding and £180.8m borrowing.
- (6) Note the revised capital programme for 2021/22 shown in Section 9 and Appendix D.

Exe/21/65 Capital Update Report

The Executive considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, which informed Members of requests to increase the capital programme. The report also sought approval for those schemes that could be approved under authority delegated to the Executive and asked the Executive to recommend to Council proposals that required specific Council approval.

The proposals which required Council approval were those which were funded by the use of reserves above a cumulative total of £2million, where the use of borrowing was required or a virement exceeds £0.500m. These included the following proposed changes:-

- Highways Services (Patching Defect Repairs Programme 2021/22) – a capital budget increase of £4.361m in 2021/22 and £0.883m in 2022/23, funded by £0.500m RCCO, £3.744m Grant and a capital budget virement of £1m from the Highways Project Delivery Fund budget;
- Neighbourhoods (Library Refurbishment) – a capital budget increase of £0.500m in 2021/22 is requested, funded by borrowing;
- Neighbourhoods (New Islington Marina Bridge Works) – a capital budget increase of £0.156m in 2021/22 is requested, funded by borrowing; and
- Public Sector Housing (Newton Heath High Rise Blocks Improvements) – a capital budget increase of £0.492m in 2021/22, £9.128m in 2022/23 and £4.493m in 2023/24, funded by an RCCO from the HRA.

The report then went on to detail the proposals that did not require Council approval which were funded by the use of external resources, use of capital receipts, use of reserves below £2million, where the proposal could be funded from existing revenue budgets or where the use of borrowing on a spend to save basis was required. These included:-

- Highways Services (Harpurhey and Moston – Junction and Crossings) – a capital budget increase of £1.170m in 2021/22 and £0.001m in 2022/23 funded by external contribution; and
- ICT (Future Council Discovery - Infrastructure and Application Hosting) – a capital budget decrease of £0.390m in 2021/22 and a corresponding transfer of £0.390m to the revenue budget, funded by Capital Fund.

The report highlighted that there had been increases to the programme totalling £0.075m as a result of delegated approvals since the previous report to the Executive on 2 June 2021 and if the recommendations in the report were approved, the General Fund capital budget would increase by £19.794m across financial years. This would also result in an increase in the prudential indicator for Capital Expenditure in corresponding years.

It was also reported that an offer of £2.75m was submitted on an unconditional basis to convert Buglawton Hall, a former residential special school located in Congleton, Cheshire (acquired on 6 December 1950 and held freehold by the Council) back into a single private residence had been received and in the opinion of officers, this represented best consideration under S.123 of the Local Government Act 1972. It was noted that any proposed disposal of former school playing field land and non-playing field land held by a Local Authority required the consent of the Secretary of State under S.77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Academies Act 2010. Therefore, an application for such consent would need to be progressed and successfully obtained prior to exchanging contracts on any disposal.

Decisions

The Executive:-

- (1) Recommends that the Council approve the following changes to Manchester City Council's capital programme:
 - Highways Services (Patching Defect Repairs Programme 2021/22) – a capital budget increase of £4.361m in 2021/22 and £0.883m in 2022/23, funded by £0.500m RCCO, £3.744m Grant and a capital budget virement of £1m from the Highways Project Delivery Fund budget;
 - Neighbourhoods (Library Refurbishment) – a capital budget increase of £0.500m in 2021/22 is requested, funded by borrowing;
 - Neighbourhoods (New Islington Marina Bridge Works) – a capital budget increase of £0.156m in 2021/22 is requested, funded by borrowing; and
 - Public Sector Housing (Newton Heath High Rise Blocks Improvements) – a capital budget increase of £0.492m in 2021/22, £9.128m in 2022/23 and £4.493m in 2023/24, funded by an RCCO from the HRA.

- (2) Approves the following changes to the City Council's capital programme:-
 - Highways Services (Harpurhey and Moston – Junction and Crossings) – a capital budget increase of £1.170m in 2021/22 and £0.001m in 2022/23 funded by external contribution; and
 - ICT (Future Council Discovery - Infrastructure and Application Hosting) – a capital budget decrease of £0.390m in 2021/22 and a corresponding transfer of £0.390m to the revenue budget, funded by Capital Fund.

- (3) Accept the offer for the disposal of Buglawton Hall, on a without prejudice and subject to contract basis, and subject to successfully obtaining the required consent from the Secretary of State to dispose of former school playing field land and non-playing field land. The disposal would not include the requirement to undertake any schedule of works to facilitate the proposed use.

- (4) Approve the disposal of the freehold interest as the property is located outside of the City and as agreed by the Chief Executive holds no strategic importance to the Council. The proposed use as a single residential dwelling also indicated the Leasehold Reform Act would eventually become applicable, resulting in a freehold disposal in any event.

- (5) Approve the delegation of the necessary authority to the City Solicitor to complete and finalise the contractual documentation regarding the disposal.

- (6) Note increases to the programme of £0.075m as a result of delegated approvals.

- (7) Note virements in the programme of £16.931m as a result of virements from approved budgets.

Exe/21/66 Early Years - Tendered Day-care settings

The Executive considered a report of the Strategic Director for Children and Education Services, which outlined a set of proposals to support the continued provision of high quality Early Years settings across the City. The report specifically provided an overview of the impact of the current Early Years tendered day care model (whereby providers offer day-care from a Council owned building), on the Council's duty to oversee sufficient day-care for pre-school children across Manchester; the Early Years Budget and ongoing maintenance of Early Years buildings which remained part of the corporate estate.

The Executive Member for Children's Services welcomed the report, referencing the lack of government investment for providers of early years settings to enable stability within the early years sector. In essence he advised that the report sought to take ownership of the buildings, provide suitable investment and renegotiate the leases, putting stability and quality at the heart of the service.

The Strategic Director for Children and Education Services advised that report had been considered by the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee and Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee, with both committees fully endorsing the recommendations.

Decisions

The Executive:-

- (1) Note 17 of 37 leases have been surrendered since December 2015 and the potential impact on the council's ability to meet its 'sufficiency duty'.
- (2) Note the continued negative budget implications on the Early Years budget which continues even if the status quo is maintained.
- (3) Approve the recommendation for the use of each building moving forward.
- (4) Approve the re-negotiation of the current leases by corporate estates with day care providers, making clear the responsibility of the lease holder and the corporate landlord in the re-negotiated lease.
- (5) Support the proposal to include the Early Years estate portfolio in the Council's future Asset Management Programme, at an estimated cost of £0.7m per year.
- (6) Approve a budget increase of £3m, funded by capital receipts, to fund the priority works

Exe/21/67 Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2020/21

The Executive considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services (SMT Armed Forces Champion), which detailed the 2020/21 Annual Report in respect of the Council's pledges under the Armed Forces Covenant and its associated Action Plan.

The Deputy Leader (Human Resources) commented that the report reaffirmed the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, recognising the immense contribution and sacrifices that those in the Armed Forces make. The Covenant also ensured that the Council was committed to providing all the services that Armed Forces personnel and veterans required to help with reintegration with civilian life. He went on to highlight the good work that had been done since the resigning of the Covenant in 2019 and despite the challenges that the pandemic presented.

Decisions

The Executive:-

- (1) Recognise the progress made during the period 2020/21.
- (2) Note the government's intention to legislate to place the covenant on a statutory basis.
- (3) Endorse and support the priorities for 2021/22.

Exe/21/68 Manchester's Year of the Child

The Executive considered a report of the Strategic Director for Children's and Education Services, which set out proposals to dedicate 2022 to celebrating the successes of Manchester's children and young people and supporting their recovery from the impact of Covid19.

The Executive Member for Children's Services commented that COVID had brought some key concerns that must be addressed before they became entrenched and hinder, or even prevented the progress of our children and young people. Children and young people since March 2020 had had to contend with significant disruption to their routines, social development, education and learning opportunities, leaving many feeling uncertain about their future.

The Executive Member for Children's Services reported that Manchester had many reasons to be proud of its children and young people. Their resilience and achievements in the face of the COVID pandemic was something to be celebrated and the proposed Manchester Year of the Child aimed to do this, and more. By dedicating a year to a city-wide campaign of listening and acting together, the Council would seek to proactively work with and 'call to action' its family of schools, early years settings, the public, private and voluntary sector to work closely together in a focused and purposeful way to listen to what children and young people were saying and act together to create a comprehensive offer of activities, experiences and opportunities with the creativity, innovation, pride and passion that was synonymous with Manchester

In addition, during the next 12 months Manchester would engage with UNICEF to progress its 'expression of interest' to participate in the Child Friendly Cities and Place Programme and ultimately awarded 'Child Friendly' accreditation

A steering group would be established which would be chaired by the Executive Member for Children's Services and made up of key strategic leaders to work alongside the business, public and voluntary community sector to shape, drive and oversee the delivery of key activities and develop the leaving of a legacy that places children at the heart of Manchester for years to come.

Decisions

The Executive:-

- (1) Endorse and promote the dedication of 2022 to celebrating the successes of Manchester's children and young people and supporting their recovery from the impact of Covid19.
- (2) Promote initiatives/programmes within areas of responsibility that create activities, opportunities and celebrate the success of Manchester's children and young people.
- (3) Endorse and support Manchester submitting an expression of interest to become part of UNICEF's Child Friendly City and Communities programme.
- (4) Endorse the inclusion of a section of all reports presented to Manchester's Executive and Scrutiny Committees identifying the benefits and opportunities for the city's children and young people.
- (5) Request a progress and update report outlining the progress and impact

Exe/21/69 The Lodge - Foyer Model Accommodation

The Executive considered a report of the Strategic Director for Children's and Education Services, which outlined proposals for the development of a property into foyer model accommodation for up to 30 young people, as part of the Council's commitment to working closely with housing providers and partners to ensure that all care leavers had access to sustainable and affordable accommodation to meet their needs.

The Executive Member for Children's Services commented that the proposal was a positive step change to ensure that all care leavers had access to sustainable and affordable accommodation to meet their needs.

It was reported that the proposed operating model had four key aims:

- Improve the outcomes for our children by providing a quality setting for pathway to independence placements;
- Develop sustainable accommodation to meet the future demand of young people in care, stepping them into independence;
- Reduce the number of children in high-cost long-term residential care at age 17 years; and
- Develop links with sustainable community-based support to ensure young people have access to support when needed.

By introducing this foyer model of accommodation, the Council would increase the choice of sustainable accommodation to meet the future demand of young people in care stepping by them into independence and providing them with skills to share accommodation. It would also result in the reduction of the number of children in high cost long-term residential care at age 17 years by stepping them into pathways to independence earlier.

The report had been considered by the Children and young People's Scrutiny Committee who had endorsed the recommendations

Decisions

The Executive:-

- (1) Endorse the proposals for the development of a property into foyer model accommodation for up to 30 young people.
- (2) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director – Children and Education Services, in consultation with the Executive Members for Children's Services to commission foyer model of accommodation for up to 30 children looked after, delivered by Mosscafe St Vincents.
- (3) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director – Children and Education Services, in consultation with the City Solicitor to negotiate and formalise a ten year agreement with Mosscafe St Vincent , with associated contract clauses to the annual value of £731,500 per annum.