

Executive

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 20 October 2021

Present: Councillor Leese (Chair)

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

Also present as Members of the Standing Consultative Panel:

Councillors: Butt, Karney, M Sharif Mahamed, Ilyas and Taylor

Apologies: Councillor Rawlins

Exe/21/95 Minutes

The Executive approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 15 September 2021.

Exe/21/96 COVID 19 Public Health & Economic Recovery updates

The Executive considered a report of the Director of Public Health and the Director of City Centre Growth and Infrastructure, which provided an update on the COVID-19 situation within the city and the progress that was being made with the city's economic recovery.

The Director of Population Health advised that the Health Secretary would be making an announcement later in the afternoon on any additional measures that Government would be putting in place in advance of winter to address the national rise in COVID infection rates. It was expected that it would, as a minimum, confirm arrangements around the booster programme and the vaccination programme for 12 to 16 year olds.

The Executive Member for Health and Care advised that infection rates within the city were now 316.7 per 100,000 population and Manchester was currently 9th amongst Greater Manchester's Local Authorities in terms of infection rates, with rates gradually increasing but remaining below the national average and the infection rate amongst the over 60's was 233 per 100,000 which had increased over the past week and put Manchester 5th across Greater Manchester.

The Executive Member for Health and Care also reported that there had been increases in the rates of infection amongst school aged children but unlike last year there hadn't been large outbreaks in the city's university student population as there had been a good uptake of the vaccine from students. It was also reported that the Etihad mass vaccination centre would be used for the roll out of the 12 to 16 year old vaccination programme. The booster programme was well underway and the Executive Member for Health and Care stressed the importance of Manchester residents (who were eligible) taking up this offer for greater protection over the winter months.

The Executive Member for Health and Care concluded by thanking all staff who were working in CQC registered care homes for their co-operation in taking up the vaccine offer.

In relation to the city's economic recovery, the Director of City Centre Growth and Infrastructure advised that there had been a stronger footfall in both the city centre and district centres. Recent Chamber research had demonstrated that prospects were improving and independent retail was recovering slightly faster than general retail. Hotel occupancy figures had increased, with August achieving an 85% rate for weekend stays. It was also noted that the inward investment pipeline was doing well, however there were still challenges in relation to recruitment and ensuring Manchester residents who were out of work could access employment opportunities. The Council was about to launch the Business Fighting Fund which would enable the remainder of the ARG grant being made available to businesses to support their recovery.

Councillor Karney thanked the officers involved in the city's economic recovery over the last 18 months and confirmed that the Christmas Markets would be making a return to the City Centre for 2021, which would contribute to retaining jobs in the hospitality and retail sector of the city's economy.

The Leader also noted positively the scale of "job creating" development that was taking place in the city and advised that this was not being replicated anywhere else in the country.

Decision

The Executive note the update.

Exe/21/97 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 Children's Services reported that supermarket vouchers worth £15 per eligible child, from nursery through to Year 14, would be funded by the Council over the October half term. The move was a response to the Government's decision to end the Universal Credit uplift and growing fuel prices and financial pressures on the most in-need Manchester families.

In the absence of the Executive Member for Environment, the Deputy Leader (Finance) advised that Manchester's new Tower of Light structure had been switched on, marking a milestone in the development of the city's new Civic Quarter Heat Network. The illuminated 40m tower would provide heating and electricity to some of Manchester city centre's most iconic buildings. The network would go live in early 2022 and help reduce each building's carbon emissions and support the city's transition to zero carbon by 2038.

The Executive Member for Housing and Employment reported that Planning permission had been granted for the development of 69 low-carbon social homes on Silk Street, Newton Heath. Electric vehicle charging points would be included as part of the development. The houses would have generous gardens and solar panels, while the apartments would feature living green roofs as part of the project's low carbon commitment. This would also include the use of Ground Source Heat Pumps and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery to keep utility costs down for residents. The homes would be managed by Northwards Housing. Work was expected to begin on site in the New Year.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods advised that two Manchester parks and four cemeteries had been awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award, the international quality mark for well-managed parks and green spaces. Heaton Park and Alexandra Park, along with Gorton, Phillips Park, Southern and Blackley Cemeteries, had all been awarded the status which was a recognition of the hard work of both staff and volunteers to maintain and improve the spaces. Heaton Park had also been awarded the coveted Green Heritage Site accreditation, supported by Historic England, for the management of its historic features.

Decision

The Executive note the update

Exe/21/98 Capital Programme Update

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 £2 million, where the use of borrowing was required or a virement exceeded £0.5m. These included the following proposed changes:-

- Neighbourhoods – Blackley Crematorium Cremator Replacement Additional Funding. A capital budget increase of £0.203m was requested, funded by borrowing for additional required works including, increased ventilation requirement, electricity supply upgrade, increase in the amount of builder works required to align new cremators with existing openings and inflation costs.

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 – Manchester Cycleway Construction (Fallowfield Loop and Yellow Brick Road). A capital budget increase of £0.375m in 2021/22 and

£3.341m in 2022/23 was requested, funded by external contribution for upgraded pedestrian and cycle facilities with improvements from a safety, access, lighting and ecological perspective on the Fallowfield Loop and Yellow Brick Road.

- Children's Services – City Centre School. A capital budget increase of £2.450m in 2022/23 and £0.250m in 2023/34 was requested, funded by external contribution, and a capital budget virement of £0.250m in 2021/22 and £3.250m in 2022/23 was requested, from the approved Education Basic Need Unallocated budget for the creation of a new primary school at the Crown Street Phase 2 development in the ward of Deansgate.
- ICT - Highways Maintenance and Street Works Asset Management Software. A capital budget decrease from ICT Investment budget of £0.356m in 2021/22 and £0.075m in 2022/23 was requested and approval of a corresponding transfer of £0.431m to the revenue budget, funded by capital fund for the implementation of a new software solution for Highways which will make Manchester City Council more efficient and effective in discharging its statutory duties with regard to Highways Maintenance and Streetworks.
- Highways Services - Transfer of Great Ancoats Street (GAS) Funding to the A6 Stockport Road Pinch Point Scheme. A capital budget virement of £0.155m in 2021/22 is requested, funded by borrowing from the Great Ancoats Street Improvement Works approved budget due to unforeseen costs encountered during the construction phase of works due to ground conditions and a water main requiring additional works.

The report highlighted that there had been increases to the programme totalling £0.376m as a result of delegated approvals since the previous report to the Executive on 15 September 2021 and if the recommendations in the report were approved the General Fund capital budget would increase by £6.188m across financial years which would also result in an increase in the prudential indicator for Capital Expenditure in corresponding years.

Approval had also been given for a capital budget virement from the Unallocated Education Basic Needs budget to The Barlow RC High School. The £1.050m for the project would add a resource provision of 16 places to the school's capacity for children with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP). A further capital budget virement had been approved to ensure the final outstanding payment to the contractor for the expansion of Crab Lane Primary School in 2015-16. £0.010m was vired from the Unallocated Education Basic Needs budget. And finally, a virement for Wythenshawe Track Changing Rooms was also approved utilising the Parks Development Programme budget. The additional £0.105k for the project would ensure the replacement of accessible changing and toilet facilities at Wythenshawe Athletics Track.

Decisions

The Executive:-

- (1) Recommends that Council approve the following changes to Manchester City Council's capital programme:

- Neighbourhoods – Blackley Crematorium Cremator Replacement Additional Funding. A capital budget increase of £0.203m is requested, funded by Borrowing.
- (2) Approves the following changes to the City Council’s capital programme
- Highways Services – Manchester Cycleway. A capital budget increase of £3.716m is requested, funded by External Contribution.
 - Children’s Services – City Centre School. A capital budget increase of £2.7m is requested, funded by External Contribution, also, a capital budget virement of £3.5m is requested, from approved Education Basic Need Unallocated budget.
 - ICT - Highways Maintenance & StreetWorks Asset Management Software. A capital budget decrease from ICT Investment Budget of £0.356m in 2021/22 and £0.075m in 2022/23 is requested and approval of a corresponding transfer of £0.431m to the revenue budget, funded by Capital Fund.
 - Highways Services - Transfer of Great Ancoats Street (GAS) Funding to the A6. A capital budget virement of £0.155m is requested, funded by Borrowing from Great Ancoats Street approved budget.
- (3) Notes the increases to the programme of £0.376m as a result of delegated approvals.
- (4) Notes the virements in the programme of £1.165m as a result of virements from approved budgets

Exe/21/99 Large Scale Renewable Energy Generation Feasibility Summary Study

The Executive considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, which presented the key findings from the Feasibility Study and Options Appraisal for Large Scale Energy Generation for Manchester City Council, which had been undertaken to determine the best way for the Council to achieve a 7000 tonne reduction in CO₂ by 2025, which was a target within the Council’s Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP).

The Feasibility Study concluded that the Council had two options, either purchase a solar PV facility or negotiate a suitable power purchase agreement (PPA). Both options were assessed to be better than the “do nothing” option. Solar PV was recommended as the most appropriate renewable technology as onshore wind developments were very limited in availability and were often subject to planning challenges. Offshore wind was generally too large a scale to be suitable.

The size of requirement needed to deliver 7,000 tonnes of CO₂ annual savings was equivalent to 33MW of solar PV. To deliver benefits beyond this point and contribute more significantly to the Council meeting its target to be zero carbon by 2038, then between 45-50MW of solar PV would be required and it was recommended that the Council should consider adopting this size of requirement to future-proof residual emissions through to 2038. It was noted that the Council had maximised capacity on

its own buildings for renewable energy generation with 6.67MW already scheduled to be installed via roof-mounted solar PV installations on the Council's estate.

It was reported that there was no suitable land in Council ownership to deploy 45-50MW of solar capacity. An area of approximately 100 Hectares of land would be required to deliver the 7,000 tonnes of CO₂ requirement nor were any opportunities identified within Manchester for a partnership project. As such the feasibility study concluded that the Council needed to look out of area to deliver the required size of generation, given there were no local opportunities for solar PV at the required scale.

It was noted that a budget of £27m–£30m was the estimated cost for an asset purchase, which would have an anticipated lifespan of 35-40 years. Should this option be selected, and a suitable facility identified, the Council would need to be prepared to move at speed as the numbers of projects of this kind coming to market were relatively few and were likely to be in high demand.

It was reported that in order to progress effectively, a project team would be created which would incorporate appropriate internal capacity within the Council's Corporate Landlord functions (including our Energy Management and Facilities Management Teams). This team would be complemented by securing appropriate expert advice to implement the recommendations around purchase of a solar facility twin-tracked with a PPA. This twin-track approach would allow the Council to progress the two recommended options in line with the findings of the feasibility study and was necessary to allow the Council to make the right purchase to meet its needs within the CO₂ targets and timescales set in its Climate Change Action Plan.

Decisions

The Executive:-

- (1) Note the options available to the Council.
- (2) Agree that the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer and the Chair of the Zero Carbon Coordination Group establish a delivery team to develop the options further, with a view to returning to the Executive with a proposal.

Exe/21/100 Manchester Fort - Draft Development Framework

The Executive considered a report of the Director of City Centre Growth and Infrastructure, which informed of the outcome of a public consultation exercise with local residents, businesses and stakeholders, on the draft Development Framework for the Manchester Fort site and sought approval of the framework.

The Manchester Fort Shopping Park occupied a strategic location in North Manchester; adjacent to the intersection of the main radial routes of Cheetham Hill Road and Queens Road. It had been established as a bulky goods shopping destination in 2004 and had since evolved into one of the largest and most successful retail parks of its kind in the North West.

The framework was produced in collaboration with Nuveen who were the owners of the site. In response to evolving market trends within the retail sector, Nuveen were seeking to diversify the shopping park in order to maximise its potential and create flexibility to adapt to the changing market. The vision and development principles set out within the framework sought to secure the long-term prosperity of the park and ensure that it continued to play an important role for the communities of North Manchester.

A total of 33 responses were received to the consultation, 73% of respondents 'strongly agreed' that they supported the long-term plan to introduce new flexible retail space, an expanded food and drink offer, a hotel and a cinema. 70% of respondents 'strongly agreed' that they supported plans to extend the usage of Manchester Fort Shopping Park to contribute to the evening economy and 83% of respondents 'strongly agreed' with plans to enhance the environment of the shopping park whilst providing better accessibility for pedestrians.

An additional response was also received on behalf of a landowner and operator of a site within Manchester city centre which included a range of leisure operators. This landowner had recently secured planning permission to deliver a range of works to the external and internal appearance of their site, to ensure that it remained at the forefront of the leisure market. The response highlighted that the committed investment could be impacted, should a major leisure-led development come forward at Manchester Fort. The concerns raised within their response predominantly focused on the proposed expanded uses detailed within the draft Development Framework.

In response to the consultation, the draft framework had been updated to accurately capture the role and importance of the city centre and reaffirm the need for future relevant planning applications to be subject to planning policy requirements throughout.

Decisions

The Executive

- (1) Note the outcome of the public consultation on the draft Manchester Fort Development Framework, and subsequent suggested revisions to the draft framework.
- (2) Approve the Manchester Development Framework and request that Planning and Highways Committee take the framework into account as a material consideration when considering planning applications for the area.

Exe/21/101 Youth and Play Commissioning Arrangements

The Executive considered a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods), which provided a summary of the evidence and research collated during consultation with the wider youth and play sector during the spring and summer and set out a revised model of delivery for the commissioning of the youth and play sector, which was currently a role undertaken by Young Manchester.

As part of the research into different approaches to youth and play commissioning, officers spoke to Heads of Youth (or equivalent) in five other Local Authorities, as well as Head of Service from across Manchester City Council, to understand what worked well and what was needed.

Some respondents involved in the wider engagement had expressed concern that if any future arrangements were delayed it would create uncertainty for organisations across the City, which in turn would have a negative impact on children and young people. It was noted that any future commissioning arrangements would need to be underpinned by a programme of workforce development and strategic leadership – both of which had been highlighted as a high priority during the Young Manchester Review and the Sector Engagement sessions.

Following the engagement that had been undertaken it was proposed that the commissioning arrangements for Manchester City Council funding for youth and play activity was directed under a new model, with the Council's role to administer, manage and provide continued support to all organisations involved in the delivery of the wider youth and play offer. The proposed new arrangements would see providers within the 6 youth and play partnerships and Neighbourhoods supported directly by their Area Youth Lead to submit applications for youth and play funding. These applications would be reviewed by a local youth advisory panel, who would make funding recommendations to the Youth Commissioning Board.

The proposed new model of delivery would build on the existing strengths and progress made over the last four years, it would reduce operational overheads and seek to remove duplication. In time it was anticipated that more funding would reach grassroot organisations who were working directly with children and young people. The new arrangements would ensure that place-based commissioning would be embedded, which would be approved by a panel of individuals who were based in and had in-depth knowledge of the area and would also provide the City Council with increased influence over the effective deployment of its own resources.

In order to ensure the next steps in the process were completed fully and robustly, it was recommended that Council extended the current commissioning arrangements in place for a one-year period as all current arrangements issued under the Youth & Play fund ended on March 31 2022. Whilst the one-year extension would be with the same organisations under the same monitoring requirements, new grant agreements would be issued and managed via the City Council Youth, Play & Participation team. The proposal was to agree and execute all grant funding arrangements for 2022/23 by the end of December 2021. As per existing agreements, all grant funding contributions would be subject to providers evidencing appropriate match funding.

Decisions

The Executive:-

- (1) Note the findings from the sector consultation and Local Authority research which have informed the future commissioning arrangements.

- (2) Agree the option presented for the future commissioning of the youth and play sector, which will enable the Council to a) fulfil its Statutory Youth Duty; b) fulfil the priorities identified in the Our Manchester Youth Strategy; c) align with the priorities and focus of the Children & Young People's Plan.
- (3) Delegate responsibility to agree the grant payments for 2022/23 totalling £1.44M to the Deputy Chief Executive & City Treasurer and Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Executive Member for Children & Young People and the Deputy Leader.