

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Executive – 16 March 2022

Subject: Our Manchester Progress Update

Report of: The Chief Executive

Summary

The report provides an update on key areas of progress against the Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025 which resets Manchester’s priorities for the next five years to ensure we can still achieve the city’s ambition set out in the Our Manchester Strategy 2016 – 2025

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to note the update provided in the report.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the decisions proposed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Our Manchester Strategy outcomes	Contribution to the strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The work to reset the Our Manchester Strategy considered all five of the Strategy’s existing themes to ensure the city achieves its aims. The themes are retained within the final reset Strategy, Forward to 2025.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city’s economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	

A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	
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Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

None

Financial Consequences – Capital

None

Contact Officers:

Name: Joanne Roney OBE, Chief Executive
Position: Chief Executive
Telephone: 0161 2343006
E-mail: Joanne.Roney@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Alun Ireland
Position: Head of Strategic Communications
Telephone: 0161 2343006
E-mail: Alun.Ireland@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Executive Report – 17th February 2021 - Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This is the ninth in an ongoing series of reports highlighting examples of areas where strong progress is being made against key strategic themes identified in the Our Manchester Strategy.

2.0 Ukraine

- 2.1 Manchester stands ready to welcome any Ukrainian refugees who relocate to the city. While Manchester has a relatively small Ukrainian population, we are continuing to provide help and support to residents of the city who want to bring Ukrainian relatives to the UK.
- 2.2 The Council is in regular communication with the Government and has begun to co-ordinate planning activity to make suitable provision for any arrivals. At the time of writing, further details of the Government's Local Sponsorship scheme for Ukrainians were awaited. We are also exploring options for any local fundraising which may be required to augment the support available.

*Relates to Our Manchester themes:
Progressive and Equitable City*

3.0 Heaton Hall

- 3.1 The latest phase of repairs to Grade I-listed Heaton Hall, in Heaton Park, has been completed.
- 3.2 The Hall has received funding support from Historic England and Manchester City Council to conduct essential maintenance works and ensure the building is protected in the future. The building, which dates back to 1772 and is considered one of the North West's most important heritage assets, has been on Historic England's At Risk list for many years.
- 3.3 The Hall has undergone five phases of essential maintenance works. The previous four phases have consisted of work including repairs to the east and west wings; replacement of the windows and shutters and, fixing the roof of the Orangery to protect the Hall.
- 3.4 The latest phase consists of on-going maintenance repair works including the replacement of recently broken windows, rendering repairs, and internal repair work on the first floor. Maintenance and ongoing repairs were started more than three years ago and have now been completed to help protect the architectural gem for future generations.
- 3.5 The Friends of Heaton Park will conduct free, monthly guided tours on for groups to enjoy on Sunday 10 April, Sunday 8 May, Sunday 19 June, Sunday 10 July, Sunday 14 August, Saturday 10 September and Sunday 11 September. There will also be charged, guided tours around the Hall on every second Sunday conducted by Blue Badge Guide Jonathan Schofield.
- 3.6 Manchester's flagship Heaton Park – along with the iconic Heaton Hall – has

also benefited from major improvement works that will help maintain one of the city's best-loved green spaces and most popular cultural attractions.

- 3.7 Recently, 18 English oak trees have been planted in Heaton Park, on either side of the tram track near the Middleton Road entrance as part of the £1m Tree Action MCR programme, funded by Manchester City Council.
- 3.8 Over the past five years the Council has been refashioning aspects of the park in a sustainable way to help ensure accessibility and to further enhance the setting of the Hall and make the Grade I building a fitting focal point of the wider park landscape. Improvements include the provision of new toilets in the park; creating wider entrances; the resurfacing of main paths and installing 23 new benches.
- 3.9 For information on the Friends of Heaton Park and their tours:
<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofHeatonHall/>

For more information on the Jonathan Schofield tours please visit:
<https://www.jonathanschofieldtours.com/heaton-hall-and-park-tour.html>

*Relates to Our Manchester Strategy themes:
Thriving and Sustainable City*

4.0 Digital Strategy

- 4.1 Manchester's new Digital Strategy, setting out how the city can grow its thriving digital sector while ensuring residents are equipped with the skills and infrastructure to benefit, was launched at the Digital City Festival earlier this month.
- 4.2 Manchester Digital Strategy is a vision for the whole city – the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, and not least Manchester residents – covering the period up to 2026. The Council has led on its development but with the input of 63 partners and networks.
- 4.3 Manchester is Europe's fastest-growing 'tech city' with an economy worth an estimated £5bn, employing 58,000 people in more than 10,000 businesses.
- 4.4 The strategy aims to help Manchester become a world-leading digital city – mirroring and contributing to the goals of the wider Our Manchester Strategy for the city. This means tackling digital exclusion, which often goes hand in hand with social exclusion, and helping ensure that the workforce in the digital sector reflects the diversity of the city.
- 4.5 Technology can also be harnessed to support other ambitions – such as the target of Manchester becoming zero carbon by 2038 or earlier.
- 4.6 The strategy has four key themes:
- 4.7 *Smart People*

4.8 Ensuring Manchester people have the skills and opportunities to access jobs in the growing digital sector – and to access services digitally. This includes working with industry and training providers to ensure that people are equipped with the skills which will be in demand, including in more specialist sectors. Investments in facilities such as Manchester College’s new city centre campus and Manchester Metropolitan University’s School of Digital Arts (SODA) are already beginning to bolster training and skills provision. Encouraging entrepreneurship and providing new routes into the sector – for example skills bootcamps – will also help break down barriers and promote diversity.

4.9 *Digital Places*

Creating the right network access and digital infrastructure to support growth and innovation in connected ‘digital neighbourhoods’ - and making use of data to support service delivery.

4.10 *Future Prosperity*

4.11 Enabling the digital economy and ecosystem to grow while improving the connections between businesses and Manchester people. This includes strengthening existing networks, identifying new potential areas for growth and working with organisations such as Greater Manchester Combined Authority and MIDAS on targeted digital investment.

4.12 *Sustainable Resilience*

4.13 Using digital innovations to help meet zero carbon and climate resilience goals. This includes looking at how collecting and sharing data around carbon emissions could help reduce them and how technology can help manage demands on energy, for example through the increasing use of electric vehicles.

4.14 The Council will move to establish a small digital team to help work with key stakeholders to help deliver the strategy.

4.15 To read the full strategy visit www.manchester.gov.uk/digitalstrategy

Relates to Our Manchester Strategy themes:

Connected City

Highly Skilled City

5.0 Council Tax rebate and discretionary schemes

5.1 Government has announced two schemes to support households facing rising energy costs: The £150 Council Tax Rebate scheme and a discretionary scheme that aims to support those who do not qualify for the Rebate scheme but are still facing hardship. Government wants payments to go out as soon after 1 April 2022 as feasible and the Council will work to process them as

quickly as possible.

5.2 *Council Tax Rebate scheme*

5.3 The person liable for Council Tax in every occupied property in Council Tax Bands A - D (nearly 96% of Manchester properties) will receive a one-off payment of £150. Residents who pay Council Tax by Direct Debit (around 110,000) will receive the payment directly into their bank account. Those who do not (around 105,000) will be written to and invited to make an application. This scheme is fully funded by central government.

5.4 Third party software has been identified to receive the applications. It will make the necessary prepayment checks to identify possible fraudulent applications and offer the option of having the payment credited to an applicant's Council Tax account. There will be an option for an assisted application to be made for those who are digitally excluded and methods of payment for those who do not have a bank account have been identified.

5.5 *The Discretionary Scheme*

5.6 The Council will receive £1.6 million to fund this scheme. It will be aimed at all those residents in Band E properties, those in receipt of Council Tax Support in Band F – H properties, residents of Houses in Multiple Occupation (who are not liable for Council Tax) with responsibility for their energy costs and new residents in bands A to E properties who have not already received a £150 payment.

5.7 *Resources*

5.8 These schemes will be principally delivered by staff in the Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service Organisation with support from colleagues in Finance, Communications and ICT. Given the number of applications that may be received (up to 105,000) it is expected to be a considerable drain on resources. New burdens funding will be made available by central government, but this is unlikely to cover the cost of administering the scheme in full.

*Related Our Manchester Strategy themes:
Progressive and Equitable City*

6.0 Housing support

6.1 A new support fund is being established for Manchester City Council tenants struggling financially when rent increases come into force this April.

6.2 Some £200,000 has been set aside by the Council for one-off payments to tenants who find themselves facing severe financial difficulties. An application process is being developed and payments will be made by bank transfer or vouchers to those assessed as meeting the criteria.

- 6.3 The Housing Support Scheme will not be open to people who have purchased their homes under right to buy or are on shared ownership schemes.

*Relates to Our Manchester strategy themes:
Progressive and Equitable City*

7.0 White Ribbon accreditation

- 7.1 Manchester City Council has been awarded White Ribbon accreditation in recognition of its work to tackle male violence against women.
- 7.2 White Ribbon is a global campaign that encourages people, especially men and boys, to individually and collectively take action, challenge behaviour and change the culture that leads to abuse and violence. Their mission is for all men to fulfil the White Ribbon Promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women.
- 7.3 Receiving the accreditation demonstrates Manchester City Council's commitment to improving culture, safety and morale within the organisation and the city. It also helps staff and communities address the serious issue of male violence against women and shows them how they can challenge all acts of misogyny and male chauvinism.
- 7.4 To amplify female voices in the city, the Council are assembling a task force of women Councillors who will ensure that issues affecting women are highlighted and tackled by Manchester City Council. The Council has also pledged to call on Greater Manchester Police to record the harassment of women and girls as a hate crime now, ahead of the Government deadline in Autumn.
- 7.5 Commitments made by Manchester City Council in their White Ribbon action plan include: establishing a network of male ambassadors to promote the message and raise awareness with other men across the city; updating its workplace domestic and sexual abuse policies, guidance and training; ensuring through the Safe Accommodation Pathway that there are housing and support services for women and children who need to flee violence and abuse; co-ordinating a range of measures to improve the safety of the city's night-time economy.
- 7.6 Individuals can join over 37,000 others who have signed the White Ribbon UK pledge and get more information online at whiteribbon.org.uk.

*Relates to Our Manchester Strategy themes:
Progressive and Equitable City*

8.0 Social Value

- 8.1 Figures released last month highlighted the positive role of the Council's spending power in creating opportunities for Manchester residents.

- 8.2 Analysis of the Council's spending with its top 300 suppliers produced by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) was published as the city hosted a conference about the role procurement can play in 'Building Back Fairer.'
- 8.3 The economic and health impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic which have hit some Manchester residents – including the over-50s, young people, members of ethnic minorities and low-income communities – disproportionately.
- 8.4 When the Council is awarding contracts for goods and services, it takes into account what a supplier will 'give back' to the city through jobs, apprenticeships and other opportunities for Manchester residents (especially those facing the most disadvantage); whether they have good working conditions and pay employees the Real Living Wage and what they are doing to cut their carbon emissions in line with the city's wider environmental ambitions. Together these factors make up almost one third of the total score when bids are being assessed.
- 8.5 Statistics for 2020/21 show that the Council spent £416m with its top 300 suppliers of which 59% - some £247 million-worth was with Manchester-based organisations, more than half of that (50.9%) with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs.)
- 8.6 This spending enabled the creation of 2,303 jobs and 629 apprenticeships, as well as 2,703 opportunities (such as work placements or pre-employment training) to help 'hard to reach' people overcome barriers to employment.
- 8.7 On top of this, suppliers to the Council supported 141,528 volunteering hours to support the voluntary and community sector in the city.
- 8.8 For further information on CLES' analysis of the Council's procurement spending in 2020/21, the most recent complete year, visit: www.cles.org.uk/MCCSpend

*Relates to Our Manchester Strategy themes:
Progressive and Equitable City
Thriving and Sustainable City
Highly Skilled City*

9.0 Wythenshawe Park cycle hub

- 9.1 Funding has been secured for a £1.5 million community cycling facility in Wythenshawe Park.
- 9.2 Work has started on the development of the Cycle Hub which will see the creation of a traffic-free cycle facility for all the family, including a learn to ride area, skills zone, pump track, woodland trails, and family trail.
- 9.3 The £1.55million investment in the park's infrastructure has been made possible following a successful application by Manchester City Council to the

Places 2 Ride Fund.

- 9.4 Wythenshawe Park has received an award offer of £500k from the Places to Ride programme (which is being delivered through a partnership of British Cycling, MCR Active, Sport England and the Department of Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS). This funding has been matched by the City Council through the Parks Development Programme to develop the chosen area of the park into a Cycle Hub and improve the surrounding facilities.
- 9.5 The hub will be a family-friendly space based around the existing athletics track area of the park. It will be a safe space for both new and seasoned riders to develop their skills and confidence in a traffic free environment.
- 9.6 Wythenshawe Cycling Hub will be free to access, and the public will be able to book cycling lessons with trained instructors for beginners, intermediate and advanced cyclists.
- 9.7 The new facilities will create opportunities for existing on-site partnerships such as Simply Cycling and Nacro to extend their offer to the community.
- 9.8 In tandem with this, the investment aims to motivate more Mancunians to learn how to cycle, to choose cycling as their mode of transport and, encourage people to take advantage of the increasing number of cycle routes in and around the city.
- 9.9 Work is well underway in the park- the hub began development in late 2021, after a public consultation found that over 1,800 people supported the scheme, the facility is on track to open in Summer 2022.
- 9.10 The investment is the latest phase of a wider ambition to improve the sports facilities in the park, it builds on the investment previously made to improve the tennis facilities and, will complement the work officers are exploring to secure investment to improve sports pitches, changing and the athletics track. This will ensure that the sports zone of the park is completely modernised over the next five years.

*Relates to Our Manchester Strategy themes:
Liveable and Low Carbon City
Connected City*

10.0 Contributing to a Zero-Carbon City

- 10.1 Achieving Manchester's zero carbon target has been reflected throughout the work on the Our Manchester Strategy reset, with sustainability being a key horizontal theme throughout. Forward to 2025 restates Manchester's commitment to achieving our zero carbon ambition by 2038 at the latest.

11.0 Contributing to the Our Manchester Strategy

- 11.1 The reset of the Our Manchester Strategy will ensure that the city achieves its

vision. The five themes have been retained in the reset Strategy, with the new priorities streamlined under the themes.

12.0 Key Policies and Considerations

12.1 There are no particular equal opportunities issues, risk management issues, or legal issues that arise from the recommendations in this report.

13.0 Recommendations

13.1 The Executive is requested to note the update provided in the report.