

## **Audit Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2022**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Ahmed Ali - In the Chair

Councillors Clay, Good, Hitchen, Lanchbury, Robinson and Russell

#### **Apologies:**

Independent Co-opted member: Dr D Barker

Independent Co-opted member: Dr S Downs

#### **Also Present:**

Councillor Joanne Midgely (Deputy Leader)

Karen Murray, Mazars (External Auditor)

### **AC/22/08      Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2022 as a correct record.

### **AC/22/09      Accounting Concepts and Policies, Critical Accounting Judgements and Key Sources of Estimation Uncertainty**

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which discussed the Authority's accounting concepts, conventions, policies and requirements, critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty to be used in the preparation of the 2021/22 Annual Accounts. The details of a recent emergency Code consultation were also provided for comment.

The report set out a narrative around:

- The basis of accounting policy
- Requirements around disclosure in respect of the application of critical accounting policy judgements
- A list of key sources of estimation uncertainty, including useful lives and valuations of properties which are estimated by qualified valuers, provision for business rate appeals based on claims received and previous experience of the outcome of appeals, the amount of arrears that will not be collected which is estimated based on expectations of the collection of different types of debt and the liability for future pension payments which is estimated by qualified actuaries (provided in an appendix); and
- The details of a consultation on emergency proposals for an update of the 2021/22 and 2022/23 Codes of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK, largely driven by 91% of Local Government Accounts being submitted after the statutory deadline. The outcome of the consultation resulted in a deferral of the implementation of IFRS 16 Leases for a further year and reversed the planned changes to the 2022/23 code. Whilst this outcome would

not reduce the burden on Local Authorities, there would be no further complication of the leasing treatment.

The key lines of enquiry discussed in the meeting were:

- The impact of changing interests rates and inflationary factors on matters such as pension liability, asset valuation, collections rates of council tax / business rates etc
- The impact of the cost of living crisis on arrears arising from short term / sundry debtors such as housing rent, council tax and business rates debtors

In respect of changing interest rates on pension liability, the Deputy City Treasurer confirmed that a wide range of variables were routinely monitored and kept under close consideration through a mixture of formulaic measures and actuarial assessments in order to ensure effective management. In view of the complexity within those wide-ranging factors (eg life-expectancy, pay awards, inflationary factors, investment returns) a professional judgement call was necessary to address those uncertainties. In terms of how Local Government pensions were externally audited, Karen Murray (Mazars) explained that the National Audit Office commissioned an external expert to evaluate the approach taken by the five actuaries that are in place with a focus on the assumptions that are made across numerous factors to be satisfied that those assumptions are consistently applied, are within a reasonable range and align with the national position in terms of the approach taken.

With regard to arrears from sundry debtors, the Deputy City Treasurer explained that where the Council is seeking to recovery monies, inevitably there would be those who would default which resulted in the need for an estimate of those that would doubtfully be recovered. Due to the cost of living crisis, in addition to other economic factors, the level of 'write off' was predicted to be higher than usually anticipated and therefore warranted closer monitoring.

## **Decision**

1. To approve the accounting concepts and policies that will be used in completing the 2021/22 annual accounts
2. To note the critical accounting judgements made and key sources of estimation uncertainty
3. To note the outcome of the recent emergency Code consultation

## **AC/22/10 Internal Audit Plan 2022/23**

The Committee considered a report of The Head of Audit and Risk Management which in line with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and a Local Government Application Note from the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy presented a risk-based plan of Internal Audit activity that is designed to support an annual opinion on the effectiveness of the systems of governance, risk management and internal control. The Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management

is required to communicate internal audit plans and resource requirements, including significant interim changes, to Strategic Management Team and the Audit Committee for review and approval. The audit plan for 2022/23 set out areas of proposed audit coverage for the year and the delivery of this plan would be reported to SMT and Audit Committee as part of regular audit reporting.

The report set out information about

- Basis for the Plan
- Characteristics of the Audit Plan, including its Context, Timeframe and Structure
- Resourcing of the Plan; and
- Planned Areas of Focus

The key points of discussion in the meeting were:

- The length of time taken to implement the service restructure
- Resourcing and capacity within the team to deliver
- The classification of risk within the Corporate Risk Register
- Staff welfare and wellbeing, noting the impact of the pandemic and other workforce developments

With regard to the time taken to implement the service restructure, the Head of Audit and Risk Management spoke about the complexities about health and safety aspects of the service review which had caused unavoidable delays. In terms of timescales, consultation with staff was expected to commence in early June following which appointments to posts could be made and recruitment progressed to fill vacancies in the new roles expected in July 2022.

There was a discussion about capacity to deliver more complex areas of audit activity once COVID grant related work had ceased. Members commented that they were keen to see those vacancies filled and sought assurance that there was adequate capacity to deliver the comprehensive range of audits scheduled for completion this year with sufficient flexibility to respond to currently unplanned work. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer said that COVID grant related work and more recent government schemes would remain a feature of audit activity as part of a planned lengthy programme of work. Therefore efforts had been made to ensure that there was sufficient capacity with the service to complete this work alongside the programme of scheduled work as part of the Audit Plan. The Head of Audit and Risk Management added that the Plan had been developed based on current staffing levels therefore allowing an element of capacity to respond to risks that could emerge during the year.

There was a discussion about the classification of risk within the Corporate Risk Register, with particular reference to the rating allocated for 'housing needs not being met' (defined as medium risk). The Head of Audit and Risk Management described the process involved for consideration of the Register with the Senior Management Team, adding that a discussion had taken place around that particular definition, which had recently been broadened from the narrower definition of access to affordable housing. A further meeting was therefore planned with the Strategic

Director of Development to explore whether it current rating required an amendment.

With reference to the report's mention of staff training and development, a member acknowledged the increasing demands on staff (particularly in response to the pandemic) and stressed the importance of staff welfare. In response the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer spoke about the dedication and commitment she had witnessed across the workforce to provide the best possible service to Manchester residents during the significant challenge presented by the pandemic. She said that the importance of staff welfare had been discussed at length at a recent Senior Management Team meeting which touched on challenges around competing workforce development priorities as well as recruitment. Actions were being undertaken to ensure that established measures such as staff surveys and the Council's Wellbeing Strategy were well communicated and the importance of the role of managers (with particular reference to responding to signs of stress) were referred to as examples of the types of support available.

### **Decision**

To endorse the Annual Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23.

### **AC/22/11      Annual Internal Audit Assurance Opinion and Report 2020/21**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Audit and Risk Management which discussed the delivery of the annual programme of audit work designed to raise standards of governance, risk management and internal control across the Council, in accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standard 2450.

The report provided Members with the Head of Audit and Risk Management's annual assurance opinion and report on the Council's system of governance, risk management and internal control for 2021/22.

In addition to the scope, purpose and context of the opinion, the report also included information about:

- The overall opinion for the year to March 2022 (cited as 'Reasonable'), including key strengths, risks and issues arising from audit work
- The delivery of the Audit Plan
- Audit assurance, risks and issues
- Children's Services and Education Directorate Opinions
- Adults Services and Public Health Directorate Opinions
- Corporate Core Directorate Opinions, including Information and ICT, Financial Systems, Capital Programme, Commercial Governance, Our Town Hall and the Estates Services Review
- Procurement, Contracts and Commissioning Directorate Opinions, including Carbon Reduction in Procurement, Waivers and Contract Extensions, and Follow Up Review – Children's Placements, Supplier Due Diligence
- Neighbourhoods Directorate Opinions including Governance and Oversight Housing Operations Service, Governance and the Oversight, Management of Void and Empty Properties, Grant Certifications, Highways Compensation Events

- Growth and Development Directorate including the AVRO Hollows Tenant Management Organisation
- Counter-Fraud and Investigations
- Proactive and Reactive Work; and
- An overview of the current position of earlier Audit Recommendations

The key points of discussion in the meeting were:

- The scope and scale of the local audit framework
- Avro Hollows Tenant Management Organisation (AHTMO)
- The Management of void and empty former Northwards properties

The Committee thanked officers for the comprehensive and detailed report and a discussion followed on the changing scope of governance arrangements within local government audit in reflection of the increasing move towards the partnership delivery model.

A member asked for further information about the information provided on the limited assurance opinion issued for the AHTMO, noting that there had been an issue over the logging of requests for minor repairs and fundamental differences in expectations between the Council's Strategic Housing Service and AHTMO regarding basic elements of service delivery. The importance of ensuring local ward members on such issues was also cited. The Head of Audit and Risk Management explained that this largely related to quality assurance measures for service delivery which had resulted in a number of actions being put forward in respect of refining the Modular Management Agreement (MMA) which set out the respective responsibilities of the Council and the TMO. He agreed to liaise with the Strategic Housing Service concerning the request to ensure that local ward members are advised of such issues as a matter of routine.

There was a discussion about the management of void and empty former Northwards properties and the associated actions issued alongside the 'Limited' assurance opinion. A member sought further information on likely timescales for the completion of the audit of void properties, and the implications for charging of Council Tax amongst the other recommendations put forward. The Head of Audit and Risk Management explained that performance had fallen during the pandemic and that it had been acknowledged amongst leaders in the service, that improvements were needed. A completion date of September 2022 had been identified however it was likely that some of those action points could be completed before this date. The Head of Audit and Risk Management agreed to provide further information in the next update to this Committee about the action plan for the auditing of void properties (including how and by whom that would be delivered) and would include specific reference to the management of lost rental income

## **Decision**

1. To note the Annual Assurance Opinion (2020/21)
2. To agree that the next scheduled update on former Northwards properties shall include information on the agreed action plan for the management of void and

empty properties, including the management of lost rental income.

## **AC/22/12 External Audit Progress (2020/21) Update**

The Committee considered a report of the External Auditors (Mazars) which discussed progress towards completion of the external audit of 2020/21 accounts.

Karen Murray (Mazars) reported that there had been a considerable amount of progress, such that Mazars were very close to completion of the work. Three particular areas were yet to be completed, namely the completion of 2020/21 Financial Statements work; the valuation of Property, Plant & Equipment (PP&E) Value for and work around cash balances. Mazars were in the process of working through a recently received set of accounts which it was hoped would help to resolve the small number of outstanding queries. Mazars were also awaiting soon to be announced guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) on the consideration of infrastructure assets. Ms Murray indicated that a number of recommendations would be put forward at the point that the audit is completed, in respect of the Council's measures of internal control to help streamline future external audits and facilitate completion more easily.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer confirmed that the audit process had been a particular challenge this year and made reference to no local authority having signed off their accounts at time of the meeting. This was attributable to a number of factors, the most significant of which included changes to the accounting treatments around highways which had been a particular cause of the delay. In addition, the remote close down during the pandemic; single points of failure within the Finance team (due to an unavoidable staff absence); an increased focus on valuations and changes to audit and accounting standards had culminated in issues for all parties. She referred to a piece of work led by the Deputy City Treasurer focussing on lessons learnt which would, in particular, streamline future reporting around cash flow statements.

Discussions moved to whether there would be a knock on effect on the following year's external audit completion. The Chief Accountant provided an overview of the steps necessary to progress the closure of the 2021/22 accounts and the challenges this presented in view of the planned submission date of September 2022. The Committee therefore noted that a delay on completion of the audit was indeed very likely. In respect of capacity within the Finance team to assist with its completion, the Deputy City Treasurer advised that additional resource had been provided within the Council's Finance team, with added support from wider Finance Directorate colleagues. Additionally more input was planned around quality assurance measures prior to submission to the external auditors to ease the process. Ms Murray also referred to capacity issues from the perspective of the external auditors, which was largely attributed to their scheduled programme of work with other entities meaning that pauses in progress were, at times, unavoidable.

## **Decision**

1. To note the progress of the external audit of accounts 2020/21

2. To note that the finalisation of the external audit of 2021/22 accounts was unlikely to meet the September 2022 completion date.

### **AC/22/12 Risk Review: Adults Assurance Update**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Adult Services which provided an update on the actions taken to address risk in respect longstanding and partially implemented audit recommendations in relation to Adults Mental Health safeguarding and transitions from Children's to Adults social care.

The report therefore focussed on:

- Actions Taken to Develop the Social Work Transitions in Care Service and a summary of Next Steps; and
- Actions to support the reconciliation of mental health casework records across the Adult Service function and the Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust (GMMHT), as well as additional measures taken to provide added assurance

With regard to Social Work Transitions, significant progress across the system in respect of planning and preparation for the transition to adulthood was reported, which formed part of a wider programme of improvement activity. This included the development of new practice forums, an invigorated multi-agency focus to deliver an impactful and joined up approach to referrals and care delivery. Additionally, a service delivery improvement in respect of Care Act assessments for young people before or within their 18<sup>th</sup> year instead of at or following a young person's 18 birthday was reported. The Committee was also invited to note external assurance had been provided for the service following an OFSTED inspection of Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) services in November 2021. The inspection had found leaders' clear vision for improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND; that appropriate and timely interventions were provided and good oversight of delivery including priorities for action had been maintained. Further priorities were also outlined in the meeting regarding earlier identification of young people approaching the transition to adult services and earlier assessment and review functions of young people with an Education Health and Care Plan to support the management of future demands on services. An expansion of the team was also reported in the form of two additional staff members who would be specifically recruited to deliver person focused planning arrangements.

With regard to the reconciliation of mental health casework and safeguarding referrals between social work and health colleagues, reference was made to the challenges of infection control measures arising from the pandemic on service delivery and the impact of GMMH's COVID business continuity plans to manage significantly increased demands on services. The Deputy Director of Adult Services spoke about time that had been invested in actions and resources to mitigate the complexities of reconciling records across two different recording systems, which was at the heart of the issue and was a common feature nationally across integrated health and care forums. Weekly and monthly reporting arrangements outlined in the report underpinned the process of record reconciliation, resulting in confidence that there were no gaps in the data and that the risks of omissions or errors had been addressed. In addition, further steps were being introduced around GMMHT staffing,

which included additional training input with regard to case-management recording as well as the development of the Council's own systems processes which were outlined in the report.

The Committee welcomed the work that had taken place around transitions in care services and stressed the importance of consistent oversight. With specific reference to the impact of the pandemic, a member commented that further efforts may be necessary to address the needs of those young people who had either reached or passed their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday during that time. In response, the Service Manager - Transitions confirmed that this had been identified as a priority for the service and a proposal was in place to deliver focussed activity to address those gaps, using the input of the newly expanded team as sufficient capacity would exist in the initial stages. Efforts would be made to work with affected families to rebuild a relationship of trust in service provision, including (as an example) the offer of input about their experiences as part of the ongoing journey of service improvement.

Noting that improvements had been reported in respect of timeliness of the first assessments, more detailed performance information was requested. The Service Manager - Transitions confirmed that referrals were prioritised on a needs-led basis and that whilst numbers had initially been low at the time of the introduction of monitored performance indicators, they had since doubled indicating a positive and healthy trajectory. Targets would be determined with the input of the Transitions Board, mindful that pathway planning often required a multi-agency focus where some challenges existed (e.g. the age at which a young person became eligible for a particular health services). With regard to the timeliness of follow up assessments, inter-agency service inputs were highlighted as crucial to the process leading up to those assessments. Further work was therefore planned to enable capacity to meet demand as part of planned practice-led improvement activity. Discussions moved to how future demands on services were determined. The Committee was informed that the Transitions team worked closely with colleagues in the Performance, Research and Intelligence Directorate to gather rich, high quality data on young people with an EHCP to establish whether input from adult social care or health services needed to be arranged to ensure care delivery at the best possible time, adding that feedback indicated that a lack of information, advice and guidance was the biggest source of anxiety for service users as they prepare for adulthood. In response to a question around capacity to deliver a whole system approach, the Deputy Director of Adult Services described the two predominant referral routes into adult social care services, namely transitions from children's social services and adults in later life experiencing levels of frailty. Therefore the service had adopted a range of collaborative interventions to develop an effective demand management strategy, supported by cross – directorate information sharing (which included population modelling) to better understand where and how demand will change in the future.

There was a discussion about the role of parents and carers, the Manchester Parents and Carers Forum and the Parent Carer Board which was co-chaired by the Transitions Service. The Committee was informed that whilst this was not specifically referenced in the report, input from the Forum sat at the very heart of service improvement in recognition of their crucial role.

On the subject of mental health casework, assurance was also sought in respect of



lessons learnt about the reconciliation of care systems as the move towards integrated care delivery continued. The Deputy Director of Adult Services referred to a range of developments that were underway to underpin future data sharing and systems integration in a safe and secure manner. In response to a question about safeguards and the mitigation of potential risks in relying on the manual transfer of casework records, the Deputy Director of Adult Services made reference to end to end safeguarding measures, which involved multiagency and clinical staff at referral meetings, which had been given external assurance following the recent audit. Information about that process would be circulated to the committee for information, in due course. The Deputy Director also agreed to share with the Committee, further statistical performance information on the delivery of staff training for social care and health colleagues, including scope, implementation and it's evaluation.

There was a discussion about the delivery of Care Act responsibilities. The Deputy Director of Adult Services explained that those responsibilities had been delegated to GMMH so that multidisciplinary and clinical support to people with a mental health issue was available as part of a coordinated approach to care delivery. She asked the Committee to note that whilst this model provided the best service for the service user, it provided a degree of complexity in terms of the Council's own infrastructure.

The Deputy Leader with responsibility for Adult Services thanked the Committee for its input and spoke about the Service's ongoing transformation, adding that whilst that transformation had not yet concluded, she was reassured by the positive steps that had taken place, acknowledging the strong commitment that existed across the partnerships to deliver the highest quality care.

### **Decision**

To note the assurance updates provided.

### **AC/22/13      Work Programme and Recommendations Monitor**

The Committee considered a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which set out its future Work Programme for the forthcoming municipal year.

### **Decision**

To agree the Committee's Work programme for the forthcoming municipal year.



## **Audit Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Lanchbury - In the Chair  
Councillors Good, Russell Simcock and Wheeler  
Independent Co-opted member: Dr D Barker:  
Independent Co-opted member: Dr S Downs

#### **Apologies:**

Councillor Curley  
Councillor Flanagan

#### **Also Present:**

Councillor Akbar (Executive Member: Finance and Resources)  
Alistair Newall, Mazars (External Auditor)

### **AC/22/14     Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2022 as a correct record.

### **AC/22/15     Draft Annual Governance Statement 2021/22**

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which presented the draft 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement (AGS), following completion of the annual review of the Council's governance arrangements and systems of internal control. The processes followed to produce the AGS were outlined in the report.

In addition to the scope, purpose and context, the report also included information about:

- The document's format and sections of the document, including an outline of improvements that had been made; namely a focus on producing a more easily digestible document with digital accessibility improvements, in particular for those with visual impairments, to align with good practice.
- How Governance Arrangements are communicated;
- A discussion of next steps and the Annual Governance Statement's Timeline

The Reform and Innovation Manager reported good progress in terms of strengthened and effective governance arrangements such that six of the challenges identified in the previous governance statement had been stepped down in respect of the Action Plan for 2022/23 resulting in an overall reduction in the number to be taken forward.

The main points of discussion in the meeting were:

- In view of its responsibilities for governance arrangements and systems of internal control, the frequency with which the Senior Management Team (SMT) discusses governance matters
- Noting the Head of Audit and Risk Management Annual Opinion 2021/22 was cited as 'reasonable', what actions could be taken to reach a position of 'substantial' assurance.
- The role of Trade Unions in consultations with staff where significant developments were underway.
- The role of the Audit Committee in amending the Council's Climate Change budget and the associated policy development.

In respect of the Head of Audit and Risk Management's annual opinion of 'reasonable', he explained that the opinion had been reached largely in reflection of the scale of change and challenge (the financial pressures the council faces, the scale of ambition in the city as well as recent events that had impacted on Local Authority services). Within that context, the position of 'reasonable' was deemed fair in the circumstances, although the aspiration to attain a rating of 'substantial' remained a priority for the Authority.

With regard to the frequency with which the SMT discusses governance arrangements, the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer confirmed that this was a fairly regular point of discussion, examples of which included the discussion of the AGS, governance updates, the Corporate Risk Register as well as consideration of major cross-cutting themes, deemed to have a strategic impact.

In respect of the relationship with Trades Unions, the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer advised that the Authority had long established a collaborative approach, involving formal engagement and consultation procedures. It was subsequently agreed to give greater prominence to the collaborative the Local Authority adopts with Trade Unions in the Statement.

With specific reference to the Council's agreed Climate Change Action Plan and the agreed budget for carbon reduction targets therein, a member asked about the role of the Audit Committee in amending the Climate Change budget and overall policy development with a view to meeting agreed objectives. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer explained that the AGS reference to the Plan solely focussed on the governance aspects of the Plan – the extracts outlined in the AGS referred to Local Authority's emissions targets (noting that that two Plans were in place; one for the city as a whole and one solely for the Local Authority) and that it was within the terms of reference of the Council's Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee (E&CCSC) to scrutinise performance against the Plan and put forward any recommendations concerning proposed amendments. She added that the (Local Authority's) Plan was considered on a quarterly basis by the E&CCSC and that the Plan for the city as a whole was scheduled to go through governance processes in late September / early October of this year.

## **Decision**

1. To note the draft Annual Governance Statement 2021/22.

2. To agree that greater prominence to the collaborative approach the Local Authority adopts with Trade Unions shall be incorporated into the Statement.

### **AC/22/16 Register of Significant Partnerships**

The Committee considered a report of The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which presented the annual overview of the Register of Significant Partnerships 2021. A copy of the Register of Significant Partnership is attached at Appendix 1.

In addition to the scope, purpose and context of the Register, the report also included information about:

- The process followed for the production of the Register
- Entries added to the Register in 2021
- Proposed removals to the Register
- Partnerships where the assurance ratings have improved
- Partnerships where governance strength rating remains 'Reasonable' or 'Limited' following latest assessment
- Partnerships with a 'Limited' rating
- Partnerships where governance strength rating has reduced from 'Significant' to 'Reasonable', 'Limited' or 'Weak' since the last assessment

The Head of Programme Management Office (Commercial Governance & Directorate Support) introduced the report and highlighted that in light of comments from the Audit Committee, the format, range and robustness of questions in the annual self assessment form had been strengthened. In addition, the ratings themselves had been amended to provide consistency across the approach to ratings to align with other systems of governance (including for example, the Annual Governance Statement).

The key points of discussion in the meeting were:

- The proposed removal of Manchester Health and Care Commissioning Group (MHCCG) from the Register
- The extent to which partnership arrangements with the University of Manchester could be included on the Register
- The 'reasonable' assurance rating for the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership (MSP)
- Governance assurance ratings for Tenant Management Organisations (TMO)
- The timeline for the winding up of Manchester Working Limited (MWL)

In response to the proposal to remove MHCCG from the Register, it was agreed that the new successor body (Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board) shall be added to the Register to facilitate regular feedback to the Committee. The Committee noted that the assessment of the new entity's governance arrangements was in hand and that oversight would be established once the arrangements for the place-based lead for Manchester and its relationship with the Board had been agreed.

Noting that the Council had a number of joint development sites with the University of

Manchester, a member asked about the feasibility of their inclusion on the Register. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer agreed to explore whether any projects / collaborative structures with the University fell within the scope of the Register.

There was a discussion about the 'reasonable' assurance rating for the MSP. The Head of Programme Management Office (Commercial Governance & Directorate Support) advised that a number of activities were taking place to strengthen, governance, scrutiny and accountability within the MSP which indicated a positive trajectory for the entity and had contributed to its 'reasonable' assurance rating.

Noting the positive trajectory of assurance ratings for a number of TMO's on the Register, there was discussion about the importance of maintaining robust governance arrangements for social housing entities within the city. The Head of Programme Management Office (Commercial Governance & Directorate Support) confirmed that the intention was for such entities to remain on the Register and therefore were required to submit evidence on a routine basis. This would sit in parallel with contractual arrangements that were being developed with colleagues in the Council's Audit function to underpin this monitoring arrangement.

In response to a question about the timescale for the winding up of MWL, The Head of Programme Management Office (Commercial Governance & Directorate Support) advised that it was hoped that the next update on the Register would confirm more information on how far the cessation of entity had advanced.

## **Decision**

To note the latest update of the Council's Register of Significant Partnerships

## **AC/22/17 Internal Audit Service Review Update**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Audit and Risk Management which provided an overview of progress of a service review across the Audit and Risk Management Division, including the background, rationale and implications for the internal audit service.

In introducing the report, the Head of Audit and Risk Management referred to a recent meeting with HR colleagues about the redesigned roles. He indicated that a broad timetable could be shared once those roles had been reviewed by HR colleagues.

There was a discussion about the efficiency of the service as benchmarked by similar authorities. The Head of Audit and Risk Management referred to a number of quantitative and qualitative measures used to capture performance of the audit and risk management function. These included the delivery of the Quality Assurance Improvement Programme, compliance with accepted audit standards, self assessment and feedback procedures and peer review processes as part of external quality assessment procedures.

## **Decision**

To note the service review update and receive further progress reports.

### **AC/22/18 Risk Management Strategy and Corporate Risk Register**

The Committee considered a report of The Head of Audit and Risk Management which provided an update on organisational risk management arrangements; and a copy of the latest refresh of the Corporate Risk Register (CRR).

In introducing the report, the Head of Audit and Risk Management outlined the Strategy and CRR's important role in the Council's governance framework which was routinely discussed at Senior Management and Directorate Leadership level. He highlighted that the Register was scheduled for review later this year and referred to the broad scope and fluidity of risk in terms of how it continues to manifest and impact across the delivery of Council services.

The key points of discussion in the meeting were:

- The extent to which cumulative and / or compounding risk is effectively demonstrated in the Register's three tiered rating system
- The approach taken for the development of risk management targets within the CRR
- The capability / capacity of the workforce with specific reference to the shortage of skills across the workforce, outside of managerial / technical disciplines
- The introduction of cyber-risk as a stand alone item on the CRR
- The prominence of the risks around key suppliers of goods and services

In response to a question about how cumulative risk is communicated in the three tiered system, the Head of Audit and Risk Management referred to some authorities recently introducing the use of purple to capture cumulative / compounding risk which may be considered in the upcoming review of the Register.

There was a discussion about the approach taken for the development of targets for October 2022 – a member noted that in some instances, the targets resulted in those risks being maintained at the current level as opposed to being reduced. The Head of Audit and Risk Management explained that the rationale had been to develop realistic as opposed to aspirational targets, in light of the current uncertainty around financial / fiscal matters, such that it was anticipated that despite appropriate measures being in place, the level of risk remained high. An achievable target of that risk being maintained in short term was therefore in place. Discussions then moved to the target associated with costs of capital and revenue contracts and the implications on pre-existing budget pressures. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer explained that at the point that CRR was being finalised, the Council was in the process of finalising its energy contracts and as such inflation contingencies were in place. This however did not apply to wider risks associated with medium term financial resources where it would remain unclear until December of this year what the next financial settlement would be and what impact that would ultimately have on the Council's budget position.

A member suggested that greater weighting and explicit reference ought to be given to the lack of skilled tradespeople within the workforce in the CRR's analysis of key risks, given the anticipated impacts such a shortfall could have on the performance and delivery of particular services (e.g. maintenance services) as well as a knock on effect on the associated costs of service provision.

In response to a comment about the introduction of cyber-risk as a stand alone item in the CRR, the Head of Audit and Risk Management explained that whilst cyber-risk should not be considered as a new or emerging risk for the Authority, it had previously been embedded within other risks associated with ICT, data governance and information security. A decision had therefore been made to explicitly reference cyber-risk as a standalone category on the CRR.

In response to a comment about the risks related to key supplies, the Head of Audit and Risk Management confirmed that this risk was anticipated to remain on the CRR as aspects of numerous supply chains continued to be impacted upon. This therefore warranted active monitoring and tracking through the CRR as well as other governance instruments such as the Commercial Board.

### **Decision**

To note the assurance provided by the risk management report and approve the Council's Risk Management Strategy.

### **AC/22/12 Internal Audit External Quality Assessment**

The Committee considered a report of The Head of Audit and Risk Management which discussed the requirement to undergo external assessment of internal audit effectiveness in line with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards on a five-year cycle. The Council's next external assessment was due for completion during 2022 and following consideration of a number of options, the proposal was put forward for the Authority's assessment to be undertaken on a Core Cities peer review basis.

The report set out the options that had been considered, including associated costs, the wider benefits of the proposed collaborative approach, as well as information about the scope and approach of the assessments. The Committee was invited to endorse the proposal.

Members welcomed the approach and endorsed the proposal

### **Decision**

To endorse the proposal that the next External Quality Assessment be undertaken on a peer review basis as part of the Core Cities group.

### **AC/22/13 Work Programme and Recommendations Monitor**

The Committee considered a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which set out its future Work Programme for the forthcoming municipal year.



A member asked that information about the Council's Whistleblowing Policy be included in the scope of the next Annual Anti Fraud report. The Committee agreed to this.

### **Decision**

To agree the Committee's Work programme for the forthcoming municipal year, subject to the amendment above.



## **Health and Wellbeing Board**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2022**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Midgley, Deputy Leader - In the chair  
Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children and Schools Services  
David Regan, Director of Public Health  
Kathy Cowell, Chair, Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust  
Rupert Nichols, Chair, Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust  
Bernadette Enright, Director of Adult Social Services  
Dr Geeta Wadhwa, GP Member (South) Manchester Health and Care Commissioning  
Dr Murugesan Raja, Manchester GP Forum  
Dr Doug Jeffrey, (South) Primary Care Manchester Partnership  
Katy Calvin-Thomas, Manchester Local Care Organisation  
Vicky Szulist, Healthwatch

#### **Apologies:**

Councillor Craig, Leader of the Council

#### **Also in attendance:**

James Binks, Assistant Chief Executive, MCC  
Sarah Griffiths, MHCC  
Deborah Goodman, GNNH  
Michelle Humphreys, MFT  
Julie Jakemen, CAHMS, MFT  
Vicky Smith, MHCC  
Sara Yunus, CAHMS Team  
Elaine Astley, Breakthrough UK  
Carol Brooks (independent assessor)

### **HWB/22/06 Appointment of Chair**

Councillor Midgley was nominated to Chair the meeting. This was seconded and approved by the Board.

#### **Decision**

Councillor Midgley be appointed Chair for the meeting.

### **HWB/22/07 Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2021 as a correct record.

### **HWB/22/08 State of the City 2021**

The Board received a report supported by a presentation from the Assistant Chief Executive presenting the delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy: Forward to 2025. The report also highlights progress made towards the ambitions for the city and the challenges faced. The four themes highlighted in the summary of the report are inclusive economy, inequalities, climate change and housing. The presentation provided further detail across each of the themes that make up the Our Manchester Strategy:

- A thriving and sustainable city
- A highly skilled city
- A progressive and equitable city
- A liveable and low-carbon city
- A connected city

In addition, Katy Calvin-Thomas, Manchester LCO, provided an update from the health and care sector that had included discussions with the Manchester Partnership Board. The Board had given its support to work together in addressing the issues that had been outlined within the report.

Member referred to wider determinants on health and social mobility of those on benefits and/or lower paid employment or unemployed and the impact of increases in prices and what could be done to address it and had social value provided a solution.

It was reported that partnership working was important to tackle these issues and the Work and Skills Strategy help support residents to find work. There are approximately 30,000 long-term out of work within the city that have been difficult to help move into work. Solutions would need partnerships to look at how that group could be targeted for the support needed for their conditions and to retain employment.

Director of Public Health reported that the report on the Marmot work would be submitted to the Board as part of the Work and Health Agenda focus on those suffering from long term conditions. Reference was also made to the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Board and future work topics for the Health and Wellbeing Board to consider and a report would be submitted to a meeting in the new Municipal Year.

A member referred to the Poverty Truth Commission and the importance of involving the people who are long-term unemployed in the journey to understand better their situation and try to support them into finding employment by providing them with employment opportunities. It was reported that partners have employed people with direct lived experience to support those in need. At this point it is only on a small scale and more work is needed to develop this.

The Board noted that as part of the work to achieve a real living wage city, the Council has endorsed the living wage for external providers from April 2022 for care homes and externally supported tenancies within Manchester.

## **Decision**

1. To note the contents of the State of the City 2021 report.
2. To use the report to inform their work for 2022.

### **HWB/22/09 Living Safely and Fairly with Covid**

The Board considered a report of the Director of Health regarding the publication of the National Living Safely with Covid Plan on 21 February 2022. Over the past few weeks, the Director of Public Health, council colleagues and other partners have been developing the local Manchester Living Fairly and Safely with Covid Plan.

The report included a plan based on current understanding of national policy direction on Covid-19 and what the epidemiology (scientific study of Covid-19 and how it is found, spread and controlled) has provided. The plan has been approved by the Executive.

The Health and Wellbeing Board will have the responsibility to review the implementation of the plan during 2022/23 and the City Council and partners are committed to reviewing what has worked to date and learning from experiences so far.

The plan includes:

- Summary of our Covid-19 response so far
- Covid-19 Inequalities
- Epidemiology, including possible future scenarios
- National Living Safely with Covid-19 Strategy key information
- Building a shared understanding of what 'living safely and fairly with Covid-19' means for Manchester – our approach, what we will do and inequalities considerations
- Local Governance arrangements
- Our 12-point plan for Living Safely and Fairly with Covid-19 in Manchester
- Resource Requirements.

## **Decision**

To note the report and plan.

### **HWB/22/10 North Manchester Strategy**

The Board considered a joint report and received a presentation providing an overview of the North Manchester Strategy and an update on the health infrastructure developments that form part of the strategy, namely the re-provision of the Park House mental health facility and the North Manchester General Hospital (NMGH) site redevelopment. North Manchester Strategy is key to the delivery of these ambitions and seeks to achieve civic regeneration through investment and innovation in healthcare and housing and brings together three major planned infrastructure investments in the north of the city:

- The reprovision of Park House mental health inpatient unit on the North Manchester General Hospital (NMGH) site
- The redevelopment of the NMGH site, encompassing a redesigned and substantially rebuilt hospital; Wellbeing and Education Hubs; a 'Healthy Neighbourhood' with residential and commercial space; and a Village Green
- The development of 15,000 new homes (20% affordable), with improved connectivity and amenities at Victoria North.

The Chair invited questions from the Board.

Officers were asked if the provision of a hospice may be included within the proposed plans. Also, has consideration been given the patient flow within the new hospital to ensure that

It was reported that the inclusion of a hospice has been considered although more thought needs to be given to the potential uses of the current site. The issue of patient flow will be considered and best practice and new design will be picked up from other buildings with experience gained from dealing with covid. Reference was made to commitment being made to north Manchester and the ongoing improvements that will make a positive impact on the area and its residents. The limited space at the North Manchester A&E department and the innovative ideas to address the processing of patients arriving at the hospital have shown the resourceful way staff have adapted, however the new A&E must be fit for purpose to provide a successful flow for patients. The point was also made that the potential success of the site as an anchor development could positively impact on social regeneration as well as improving health outcomes in an area of the city that has suffered poor health outcomes for many years.

## **Decisions**

1. The Board noted the report and presentation.
2. The Board endorsed the North Manchester Strategy.

## **HWB/22/11 Review of Health and Wellbeing Board**

The Board considered the report of the Director of Public Health regarding the review of the Health and Wellbeing Board following last review completed in 2018. Carol Brooks, was commissioned to provide an independent assessment and provide an independent perspective, regarding the current and future, purpose, position and function of the Board.

The Board received a statement from Carol Brooks who was commissioned to undertake the review work on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The statement referred to the six key themes had been identified from the review (Style, Potential and Opportunities, Strengths, Position, Membership and Priorities. The responses received from individual interviews and a broader group discussion raised the following points:

- a need to provide space for discussion and to explore themes in more detail.

- The Board is considered to be transactional with an assumption that there is adequate engagement outside of meetings of the Board.
- There are strong relationships within the Board which exist across that city and the changes brought about by covid have enabled the use of livestreamed meetings for further engagement.
- The business processes used by the Board are seen as good.
- Reference was also made to the position of the Board and how it sees itself and what it should be involved with and contribute on wider issues.
- The membership of the Board was not seen as a priority although more focus could be given to strengthening the VCSE and patient voice, also clinical leadership input.
- Accessing membership of the Board was considered with more clarity needed on functions and member induction.
- Is the Board executive or non-executive.

The Director of Public Health reported that the next steps and keys actions to be taken will look at the interface with the Manchester Partnership Board. A proposed new sub-group will include membership of both Boards, to look at issues in greater detail. The establishment and format of the sub-group is being produced by legal services with the servicing to be provided by GSSU at Manchester Council. Work is ongoing to address the issue of including the patient voice and a more detailed induction process for all members.

The Chair invited questions from the Board.

Members referred to the function of the Board and what changes may be needed to make the Board more effective. Reference was also made to discussions in public and the use of closed sessions as a feature in the proposed new sub-group.

It was reported that suggestions raised in the engagement process had included the need to provide space for more transformation discussions away from a formal setting. The development of the Board will be introduced as part of the review of the governance.

The Board was informed that next steps and key actions will take place during April and June 2022 to help to inform the next stage of the review process.

## **Decision**

The Board note the report and supported the next steps and key actions set out in section 4.

## **HWB/22/12 Manchester Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Update**

The Board considered a report of the Director of Public Health that provided a recap on the statutory responsibilities of the Health and Wellbeing Board in respect of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and summarised a number of recent updates to the JSNA topic papers on the mental health and emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people and on disabled people (Social Model of

Disability). It also outlines a proposal to carry out a comprehensive review of the Manchester JSNA in 2022/23.

In introducing the report the Director of Public Health acknowledged the quality of the two reports referred to (Barriers Assessment Children and Young People / Adults and Older People and Assessment Children and Young People Mental Health) and the possibility of their inclusion in the work programme for the proposed new Sub-Group of the Board and Manchester Partnership Board.

The Board received an update from the Children and Young People's Team on the report submitted.

The Board discussed the report and the importance of the work undertaken and the need to include the subject matter within the Board's work programme to ensure the experiences and data acquired is retained and used in a practical manner to bring about change.

### **Decisions**

1. The Board noted the statutory responsibilities in respect of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the recent updates to the JSNA topic papers.
2. That the Board support the proposal to undertake a comprehensive review of the Manchester JSNA in 2022/23.



## **Licensing and Appeals Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 6 June 2022**

**Present:** Councillor Grimshaw – in the Chair

**Councillors:** Connolly, Andrews, Evans, Hassan, Hewitson, Hughes, Jeavons, Judge, Reid and Riasat

**Apologies:** Councillor Flanagan

#### **LAP/22/03 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2022 were submitted for approval.

#### **Decision**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Licensing & Appeals Committee meeting held on 24 January 2022.

#### **LAP/22/04 Request for Hackney Carriage Fuel Surcharge**

The Committee considered the content of the report of the Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing which concerned a request from representatives of the Hackney Trade for a fuel surcharge to be applied on the Hackney Fare, ahead of a wider Fare Review. The report set out all the relevant considerations in relation to this request and the determination of Hackney Carriage Fares.

The Licensing Unit Manager informed the Committee that Section 2 of the report covered the decision making process and governance of all Hackney Carriage Fare variations, in that they are recommended to the Executive who determine the fares. Trade representatives had requested an increase of 60 to 80 pence increase. The Licensing Unit Manager referred the Committee to the table in the report showing fuel increases over time, dating back to April 2017. The Committee were to decide on an increase amount to recommend to the Executive.

The Chair invited the Committee to ask questions/make comments.

A Committee member asked why 60-80p amount had been the required amount?

The Licensing Unit Manager informed the member that the Trade had detailed this amount.

A Committee member asked if this amount would be put on the fare manually by drivers and if a meter adjustment would be considered.

The Licensing Unit Manager stated that there was a considerable cost for re-calibration of meters as well as the estimated time of 10 days to adjust all meters in the trade across Manchester. Also, there would be another wider Fare Review to

follow so this would potentially double the exercise. The Licensing Unit Manager then informed the Committee that the decision made in 2008 was allowed as a manual alteration and reiterated that this was a temporary review.

A Committee member asked, if the full Fare Review was set for August/September, would this temporary fuel surcharge cover the interim period and what if there was a delay to the full review?

The Licensing Unit Manager stated that there were ongoing negotiations with the airport regarding the wider review charges and any delay would cause a risk to the service but a time limit may be imposed in that the wider review could be brought to Committee in July 2022.

A Committee member noted 2.5 in the report:

*If objections are received, then the Licensing and Appeals Committee must consider those objections and set a date for any change to take effect no later than 2 months from the date of the original public notice.*

This could put the surcharge back until August 2022, close to the Full Review.

The Licensing Unit Manager stated that this was correct but added that this same practice also applies to the wider review, which would then be moved back to November/December 2022, adding that it is likely that there will be objections to any fare increases.

The Deputy Chair questioned what would happen if the wider review brought about a lesser fare increase, after Committee endorsed this increase to the Executive?

The Licensing Unit Manager expressed that the risk of this was very low as fuel is one component of the formula and there are significant increases expected over time.

The Deputy Chair asked if it was a lower amount, would this have to be agreed.

The Licensing Unit Manager stated that it would be for the Licensing & Appeals Committee to decide.

The Chair requested information on the trade meetings with the airport, noting that talks were ongoing.

The Licensing Unit Manager confirmed that another meeting was imminent, but that the wider review would have to go ahead with or without an agreement.

The Chair asked if the new formula took electric and hybrid vehicles into account and if charges would differ for these types of vehicles.

The Licensing Unit Manager stated that the formula doesn't take these into account and requires further work.

A Committee member noted that electric vehicles will need to be considered for the future, noting that electric prices are due to increase greatly. This member then asked if 60-80p would be a flat for any journey.

The Licensing Unit Manager confirmed this to be correct.

The same member noted that short journeys would be significantly more costly and this would affect disabled and older people as a larger proportion of service users.

Members of three taxi trade unions and associations were invited to comment.

Unite addressed the Committee and stated that this fare surcharge was necessary for the trade. Covid had been a difficult time for drivers on top of the cost of living crisis, trade cost increases, Clean Air plan and MLS requirement. The trade was in crisis as £30 on diesel would now cover 100 miles. The Unite representative stated 20p previously covered 1 mile. The representative thanked Manchester City Council for being very helpful with regard to the trade but expressed that there was still a fine line, adding that the trade is technically public transport, even though operators are called private drivers. The representative mentioned that there had been one fare increase over the last 10 years, that saloon taxi cars make more money than the rest of the trade and asked for this fare surcharge to be recommended to the Executive as an interim measure to help the trade and extend the flexibility shown to the trade throughout the pandemic.

The Committee asked the Unite rep how they had arrived at a 60-80 pence increase, what the trade thought about opposition from the public to increased fares and what the rest of the increase would cover where the percentage is not to cover fuel costs?

The Unite rep stated that it is not based purely on fuel but this is needed ahead of the full review, that the trade faces difficulties regardless of opposition and that shorter jobs would balance out with longer jobs, adding that the trade had the oldest fleet they've ever owned and need to look at the future.

Manchester Hackney Association (MHA) addressed the Committee and stated that there were already standard fare increases at Manchester Airport and Piccadilly, adding that fares can go up or down due to independent costings. MHA also gave mention to the costs for different types of vehicles, £60k for an electric vehicle and £43k for a diesel vehicle, stating a cost of £850 a month over 5 years. The MHA rep spoke of prices for electric charging being increased and only 1 charging hub across all taxi ranks. In final comments the MHA rep expressed that over distance there may be some losses but that, overall, and average day for a driver would balance out with the surcharge added and this would be fair for everyone.

A Committee member noted that the Hackney trade do not have the same flexibility as other companies in amending fares to charge more during busy times and during large scale city events. The same Committee member then asked if drivers tend to buy or lease their vehicles.

The MHA rep stated that the £60,000 was to buy the vehicle outright and the monthly fee was a PCP to lease the vehicle and buy it after 5 years.

The Chair invited the representative from Unite the Union to address the Committee.

The Unite rep stated that they bought the first electric vehicle on the fleet 4 years ago and noted that the charging infrastructure was very poor, informing the panel that a full charge had doubled in cost for the 60 mile capacity of an electric vehicle, making it more expensive than fuel based vehicles. The Unite rep noted the recent increases in diesel from April 2022 to the current day and gave mention of the single increase in surcharges over the last 10 years. Since the pandemic, 50% of drivers had left the trade and this was a cry for help to help those in the trade struggling to make a wage. The Unite rep concluded by stating that 80 pence was the bare minimum required to help the trade survive.

The Chair invited the Committee to make comments/ask questions.

Cllr Andrews proposed to move the recommendation of an 80 pence surcharge increase, time limited to the end of September 2022. Cllr Hughes seconded the proposal.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Executive that an 80 pence surcharge be implemented.

## **Planning and Highways Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 31 May 2022**

**Present:** Councillor Curley (Chair)

**Councillors:** S Ali, Andrews, Baker-Smith, Y Dar, Davies, Flanagan, Kamal, Leech, Lovecy, Lyons, Richards and Stogia

**Also present:** Councillors Bayunu, Igbon, Robinson, Wheeler and Wright

#### **PH/22/20      Supplementary Information on Applications Being Considered**

A copy of the late representations received had been circulated in advance of the meeting regarding applications 131344/FO/2021, 132489/FO/2021, 132626/FO/2022, 130922/FO/2022, 131859/FO/2021 & 131860/LO/2021, 130387/FO/2021, 132530/FO/2021 and 133030/FO/2022.

#### **Decision**

To receive and note the late representations.

#### **PH/22/21      Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2022 as a correct record.

#### **PH/22/22      131344/FO/2021 - Shell UK Ltd, 1081 Stockport Road, Manchester, M19 2RE - Levenshulme Ward**

This application sought permission for the installation of 7 electric vehicle charging points, and 2 jet wash bays, together with related canopies, electricity sub station and associated infrastructure, following revisions to the originally submitted proposal to enable the retention of a significant proportion of the existing grassed area and existing trees to the Cringle Road and Stockport Road frontages.

The Planning Officer had nothing to add to the printed report and thus the Chair invited the Committee to make comments or ask questions.

A member of the Committee queried if the Planning Officer was satisfied that the tree would not be damaged.

The Planning Officer stated that this had been inspected and they were satisfied it would be retained in place.

Councillor Andrews moved the officer's recommendation of Mind to Approve the application. Councillor S. Ali seconded the proposal.

#### **Decision**

The Committee agreed the recommendation of Minded to Approve.

**PH/22/23      132489/FO/2021 - Port Street, Manchester, M1 2EQ -Piccadilly Ward**

This application was a proposal for 485 homes with two commercial units in a part-34, part-11, part 9, part 7 storey building with hard and soft landscaping. 210 letters of objection were received from 2 rounds of notification and 34 letters of support. Many did not object to the principle of the site being developed, supporting the creation of more housing with appropriate facilities and are keen to see it brought back to life but object to the form of development.

The objections related to design and scale, heritage and townscape, affordable housing, need and viability, privacy and living conditions of adjacent residents, provision of public realm, traffic, highways and parking, climate change/embodied carbon, compliance with Planning Policy, precedent, and the consultation process.

The Planning Officer informed the Committee of a representation from a Local Ward Councillor who raised concerns at the profit margin of 11% during difficult times for residents, noting that previously approved schemes had had a lower profit. Another Local Ward Councillor had raised concerns that the building would have been too tall, impacting on light and privacy and would impact traffic and pollution. A neighbouring Ward Councillor considered the application domineering in its size. A second neighbouring Ward Councillor felt that the application should offer 20% affordable housing.

An objector, representing a local resident's group, addressed the Committee on the application. They felt that the impact of the application on the local community would be severe, with an inappropriate scale and character for the area. The objector felt the application was not in-keeping with the area, which is home to a conservation area that the application would over tower and overwhelm. The objector stated the application would be at least 20 storeys' higher than any other building in the area. They felt that without a decrease in height, there would be a loss of privacy for residents already in the area and would dim the light in the area. The objector stated that the details provided by the developer had not eased their concerns and they continued to oppose the development in its current form.

The applicant's agent addressed the Committee on the application.

A Local Ward Councillor addressed the Committee, stating that the application would harm, and have a direct impact, on the area. They felt there was not substantial support for the application and that the objections received far outweighed the support. The Ward Councillor stated that other developments, such as the Chapel Town Street development, in the area had been restricted on height. They felt no evidence had been provided to show that pedestrian routes would be created. In terms of Affordable Housing, the Ward Councillor noted that the developer had stated they would still turn a profit should they have offered 20% Affordable Housing, but they had not committed to that. The Ward Councillor felt a huge amount of work

had gone in to regenerating the area, but this development would harm that progress.

The Planning Officer stated that the issues that had been raised had been addressed in the report. However, they did state that the other development referenced was compliant, at 14 storeys, with the Portugal Street SRF and similarly, this application was compliant with the Piccadilly Basin SRF.

A member sought clarity on if this application would provide a gateway to other applications for taller buildings and if the courtyard referenced in the application was private for residents or open to the public.

The Planning Officer said that there would be a private resident's courtyard at 750m<sup>2</sup>, however there would also be a public space at 1500m<sup>2</sup> that would be a route through the site from Great Ancoats Street to Port Street. The Planning Officer also re-stated that the size of the building was compliant with the Piccadilly Basin SRF.

The member responded, stating they felt that 34 storeys was still too high for the area. The member felt the application would have a significant impact on the Ancoats and Stevenson Square conservation areas due to its height.

The Planning Officer stated that the harm to heritage was set out clearly in the report, and it was found to have been less than substantial. The Planning Officer said that the public benefits of an application needed to outweigh the harm. They felt they did but acknowledged that was a decision for the Committee.

A member stated that this application was 20 storeys higher than the next tallest building in the area and felt that to be excessive. They felt that should the application have been allowed, other applications would be received for similar or taller buildings. The member also noted their concerns on Affordable Housing and felt that too many developers had been allowed to get away with not building enough.

The Planning Officer re-stated that the size of the building complies with the areas SRF, and any future applications would have to be compliant too.

A member then sought clarity on whether the application would be two or three stories higher than the framework or if it was compliant. The member also noted their concerns regarding viability assessments and their frustration with most applications not offering the 20% Affordable Housing policy.

The Planning Officer responded stating that the framework allows for two buildings on the site, one of 30 storeys and another of 25. This application was for one building at 34 storeys. The Officer also informed the member that the Affordable Housing policy requires 20% across the City, not on each individual development.

Councillor Andrews moved Minded to Refuse. Councillor Flanagan seconded the proposal.

## **Decision**

The Committee agreed Mind to Refuse on the basis of the scale of the application and the impact on the conservation area.

**PH/22/24      132626/FO/2022 - 48 Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WA - Piccadilly Ward**

This application proposed 54 homes in a 15-storey building. There were 31 objections and 1 letter of support received. The objections related to: design and scale, townscape, affordable housing, amenity including sunlight and daylight, privacy and living conditions of adjacent residents, traffic, highways and parking provision, loss of trees and biodiversity and the consultation process.

The Planning Officer informed the Committee of a representation received by a Local Ward Councillor, who felt that the Affordable Housing commitment within the application does not comply with Council policy. This representation also stated that given the climate crisis, the removal of 30 trees without replacements was a concern. A second Local Ward Councillor felt the application was too tall and would have a negative impact on the area in terms of traffic and pollution, light and privacy. They also felt the application would impact on the Grade II listed style aqueduct.

No objectors to the application attended the meeting or addressed the Committee on the application.

The applicant's agent addressed the Committee on the application.

A Local Ward Councillor addressed the Committee, stating that they felt the application showed the applicant to have had no knowledge of the local area. The Local Ward Councillor informed the Committee that the proposal was not in-keeping with other buildings in the area as the proposal was for a gold tower next to traditional red-brick buildings. The Local Ward Councillor questioned if the figures on the Council website regarding the Viability Assessment were incorrect and if they were, felt they should be withdrawn. The Local Ward Councillor also addressed an article that stated they had met with the developer and had their concerns addressed, something they stated was false. They stated that there is a policy for the replacement of trees that are cut down by developers and the applicant had not adhered to this by cutting down the trees prior to putting in an application. The Local Ward Councillor felt that, whether deliberate or not, it certainly went against the spirit of what is trying to be achieved with that policy. The Local Ward Councillor stated that the Affordable Housing offered in this development went no way to mitigating the harm the development would do. They requested that the Committee be Mind to Refuse the application but also suggested a site visit.

A second Local Ward Councillor felt it would be beneficial for the Committee to perform a site visit.

The Planning Officer reminded the Committee that around four years ago, they had approved a similar development with similar materials and design, which was two storeys smaller.



A member raised the issue of parking at the site, in particular accessible parking.

Councillor Leech moved a proposal for the Committee to complete a site visit.  
Councillor Flanagan seconded the proposal.

## **Decision**

To arrange a site visit to assess the impact of the colour of the proposed building.

### **PH/22/25 130922/FO/2021 - 46 Canal Street, Manchester, M1 3WD - Piccadilly Ward**

This application proposed the erection of a rooftop extension that would be part clad to the rear with glass balustrades to the sides and the front. The extension would be set back from the front elevation by 1 metre and the side elevations by 0.75. The roof would be partially retractable and glazed. The roof terrace would close at 10pm, would have a maximum capacity of 90 covers and would only operate with seated patrons with table service. Waste and deliveries would remain as existing, with access to the external bin storage at the rear via the side elevation for collection daily. The proposal included a stair lift to provide access to the rooftop extension, and the upper floors of the building that were not previously accessible.

The Planning Officer stated they had received support from a Local Ward Councillor on the access improvements this application would bring.

No objectors to the application attended the meeting or addressed the Committee on the application.

The applicant's agent addressed the Committee on the application.

A Local Ward Councillor referenced objections from residents regarding additional noise emanation this proposal would bring. They felt confident that LOOH would be equipped to deal with that. The Local Ward Councillor was pleased that this would become another fully disabled accessible venue in The Village.

A member sought clarity on how the extra waste would be dealt with from this extension.

The Planning Officer stated that there would be no changes to waste provision.

Another member sought clarity on if the extension was both indoor and outdoor, if the 90 covers was the whole roof and that there would not be people using the extension past 22.00.

The Planning Officer informed the member that the LOOH team were happy with what had been proposed.

Councillor Flanagan moved the officer's recommendation of Mind to Approve.  
Councillor S. Ali seconded the proposal.

## Decision

The Committee agreed the recommendation of Approved for the reasons outlined within the report.

(Councillors Leech and Andrews left the room part way through this item and were therefore unable to take part in the decision-making process).

### **PH/22/26      131859/FO/2021 & 131860/LO/2021 - 50 Fountain Street, Manchester, M2 2AS - Deansgate Ward**

This application proposed the demolition of the modern extension to the Grade II Listed building, retention and refurbishment of the original Victorian facade, the erection of a commercial building (Use Class E) with landscaping, and other associated works. There had been 6 representations.

The Planning Officer noted that a further 3 representations had been received that focussed on how the development was out of touch with the area.

No objectors to the application attended the meeting or addressed the Committee on the application.

The applicant's agent addressed the Committee on the application.

A member informed the Committee of their mixed feelings regarding the application. The member wanted to see floor plates that allow lines between windows on adjacent buildings to continue. The member suggested a site visit could be beneficial for the Committee.

The Planning Officer informed the member that the floor levels of the extension would line up with number 49 Spring Gardens.

Councillor Davies moved a proposal for the Committee to complete a site visit. Councillor Lovecy seconded the proposal.

## Decision

To arrange a site visit to assess the impact of the colour of the proposed building.

### **PH/22/27      130387/FO/2021 - The Former Gamecock Public House, Boundary Lane, Manchester, M15 6GE - Hulme Ward**

The application proposed a part 9, part 13 storey purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) building providing 261 student bed spaces. There had been 49 objections from neighbours, an objection from 'Block the Block' a resident-led campaign support by Hopton Hopefuls, Aquarius Tenants and Residents Association, Hulme Community Forum and On Top of the World Hulme, an objection from Hopton Hopefuls, a letter of objection from 2 employees of Manchester University, an objection from the GP practice on Booth Street West, objections from the Guinness Partnership and One Manchester and 3 representations from members

of the public supporting the proposal. A Local Ward Councillor and Local MP had also objected.

The Planning Officer informed the Committee that a further 26 representations had been received, that raised similar issues to those that had already been listed in the report. The applicant had also provided further information on how the community hub would have been managed. The Planning Officer informed the Committee that the revised conditions were recommended.

An objector, representing a resident's group, informed the Committee they were there to speak for the ageing residents of the area. The objector stated that residents had a sense of security through the close community feel of the area, however that was being threatened by the prospect of a tower block looming over them. There was a fear amongst residents of extra noise emanation, not just during construction, but from students who would reside in the building in the future. Residents felt they may be driven out of the area. The objector stated that they welcome students into the area, however this application was not in the interests of the community. The objector felt that this application would have been detrimental to the mental health and wellbeing of residents.

The applicant's agent addressed the Committee on the application.

A Local Ward Councillor addressed the Committee, informing them that all three Local Ward Councillors in the area wanted the application to be refused, or at the very least, a site visit arranged. They noted that applications for this site had been turned down in 2008 and 2012, with the reasons for refusal applying to this application too. The Local Ward Councillor did not consider there to be a need for more student accommodation in Hulme. They informed the Committee that a former student block had been recently redeveloped for a new purpose, highlighting the lack of need. A local campaign group had polled students regarding their accommodation preferences and found that students wanted the independence of privately rented property and parking. The Local Ward Councillor felt the application would be over dominant in the street scene. The nearest neighbours to the application would be two resident social housing blocks, and a new block of the size proposed would impact on their daylight and sunlight, particularly in communal spaces. The Local Ward Councillor also stated that whilst MMU had provided a letter of support for the application, they had given no commitment to use the accommodation for their students.

A second Local Ward Councillor informed the Committee that the development failed to consider the health and wellbeing of current residents and ignored Manchester's ambition of being a zero-carbon city. The developer planned to fell 5 trees, including 1 that was subject to a tree preservation order. The developers had suggested they would replace the trees, but the diminished sunlight caused by the development would make it difficult for them to survive. The Local Ward Councillor informed the Committee that 20% of residents at a nearby housing block had insufficient Vitamin D and a block of this size would exacerbate this. Elderly residents in the area have been trying to develop a community cohesion that is relevant to them. The Local Ward Councillor felt the building plan was bland and uninspiring and did not give sufficient regard to surrounding area.

A third Local Ward Councillor informed the Committee that the current owner of the land chose not to work with community to develop it and that is why it lies derelict. They felt that this development would increase on-street parking in an area covered by permit parking bar one street. Local residents were concerned about the construction phase, having already had issues with previous developments in the area. Two housing providers had objected to the application, along with the Local GP surgery. The proposed 261 bed spaces would only serve to have increased noise emanation.

The Planning Officer stated that the issues raised had already been set out in the report and there was nothing useful to add. However, they did note that one of the previous applications that had been refused, had that decision overturned on appeal.

A member stated they would like to propose *Minded to Refuse* on two grounds. The first of these was the scale of the proposal on such a small site. The member felt this would be detrimental to the area visually and would dominate the area with its size. Their second ground for *Minded to Refuse* was that under National Planning Policy Framework, parking should be provided in close proximity to the entrance for those with disabilities. The member felt this could not be seen in the application.

A second member sought clarity on the Community Hub offered as part of the development. They stated that the late representations had informed them that the Community Hub would be available for hire by any Hulme based group but that was subject to the developer or owners' approval. The member felt that this could allow the developer or owner to only allow those groups they liked to use the space. The member then sought clarity on if students living in the accommodation would be eligible for a parking permit in the area and how the application could suggest there is robust evidence for the need of extra student accommodation when a former student block has been recently converted for a different use.

The Planning Officer informed the Committee that they could impose conditions on the use of the Community Hub should they be *Minded to Approve*. Their instinct was that students would not have been eligible for a parking permit but did not have a definitive answer. The Planning Officer then informed the Committee that a report had gone to the Executive in 20/21 that discussed the issue of student need for accommodation. They stated this report provided clear evidence of a number of students choosing to live in mainstream student accommodation both in and around the City Centre.

A member then sought clarity on the affordability of the accommodation, seeking a ballpark figure on the costs for students.

The Planning Officer stated that 20% of the accommodation was aimed at being affordable but could not provide an exact figure on costs.

Councillor Flanagan moved *Minded to Refuse*. Councillors Leech and Andrews seconded the proposal.

## **Decision**

The Committee agreed Minded to Refuse on the basis of the scale of the application and the parking issues in the area.

**PH/22/28      132530/FO/2021 - 320 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M14 6XQ  
- Old Moat Ward**

The application proposed a change of the use of the ground floor of a long-established hair salon/barbers in the Fallowfield District Centre, to provide a café bar/restaurant at the ground floor with a reduced-scale salon in the basement. The existing 5-bedroom duplex residential flat above the property would be retained.

The proposed café-bar/restaurant provides 31no. covers internally and a further 20no. externally. Additional seating that was proposed on a side alleyway in the applicant's ownership has been deleted from the amended scheme, and cycle parking has been introduced on the front forecourt adjacent to the entrance.

External seating and cycle parking will be separated from the public footpath by railings which enclose the front forecourt space. On the south side, where the forecourt runs along the service road into the side alley, the railings will be erected on a new brick wall. A small (11.2m<sup>2</sup>) single storey rear extension within the rear yard curtilage is proposed to accommodate WC's. Segregated bin storage for the bar and flat are also in the yard and a new enclosed bin store for the salon is proposed towards the rear of the site.

Access for the basement salon and flat is proposed via the unadopted alleyway and a new entrance in the rear yard. There is no off-road parking associated with the site as at present, but it is well served by public transport along Wilmslow Road.

A total of 1no. letter of support and 7no. objections, including from a local residents' group had been received. Most objectors remain concerned about the prospect of another bar in the area and ongoing issues with noise, disturbance, crime and litter, which they perceive will be further intensified by any approval of the application.

The Planning Officer informed the Committee that, since its deferral at the last meeting, the scheme had been revised. This included a reduction in operating hours, a bin store being moved and the drinking area at the front of the site closing at 21.30.

No objectors to the application attended the meeting or addressed the Committee on the application.

The applicant's agent addressed the Committee on the application.

The Planning Officer stated that the recommendation was to approve with the conditions suggested.

A member sought clarity on the three refuse areas in the application and where they would be.

The Planning Officer informed the member there would be a bin store for the restaurant and living accommodation in the rear yard area, and the salon would have a small area in the alleyway. They explained that a condition of the application is to explore with the applicant how this area could be moved to within the property.

Councillor Richards moved the officer's recommendation of Mind to Approve. Councillor Andrews seconded the proposal.

## **Decision**

The Committee approved the application including the conditions, as detailed in the report submitted.

### **PH/22/29      133030/FO/2022 - Land to the South of Cavendish Road, Manchester - Didsbury West Ward**

The proposals relate to the redevelopment of an irregular shaped fenced off and grassed site adjacent to 2,3 and 4 storey residential properties developed as part of the redevelopment of the former Withington Hospital site and single and 2 storey buildings in use as nursing and dementia care homes known as Brocklehurst and Monet Lodge. The application site formed part of the wider former hospital site prior to its redevelopment and previously contained a number of buildings used for support facilities for the wider Withington Hospital complex. The site and land were cleared in the early 2000s and subsequently the majority of the land to the west and south was redeveloped for residential and commercial purposes. The application site has remained in the ownership of the NHS but was not accessible from Cavendish Road, the area was subsequently fenced off from adjacent residential flats within the past two years.

The application relates to the proposed redevelopment of the site for residential purposes accessed via the existing vehicular access from Cavendish Road for the erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings part 2/part 3 storeys in height, with associated car parking and landscaping.

The proposals were subject to notification by way of 34 letters to nearby addresses. In response 12 objections were received, Didsbury West ward members Cllr Debbie Hilal and Cllr John Leech have both made comments objecting to the proposals. The main concerns raised relate to the loss of open green space, overlooking of existing residential properties, potential damage to trees and that the development is a back land development.

The Planning Officer had nothing to add to the printed report.

No objectors to the application attended the meeting or addressed the Committee on the application.

The applicant's agent addressed the Committee on the application.

A Local Ward Councillor addressed the Committee, stating they felt this was a significant improvement on the previous proposal. The Local Ward Councillor

thought there was a slight inaccuracy in the late representations, stating that they felt the access to the land was blocked off at the same time as the Didsbury Point development was built. Residents used this green space, unaware the land belonged to the NHS. The Local Ward Councillor still had concerns that the development would overlook the only outside space of Monet Lodge.

The Planning Officer confirmed that it was private space and it had been fenced off. They stated there was no direct overlooking of Monet Lodge.

Councillor Andrews moved the officer's recommendation of Mindful to Approve. Councillor Richards seconded the proposal.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed the recommendation of Approved for the reasons outlined within the report.

(Councillor Leech declared a personal interest in the application but addressed the Committee as a ward councillor before leaving the meeting and taking no part in the consideration or vote.)

### **PH/22/30 Confirmation of the Manchester City Council (Land at car park adjacent to York Street, Didsbury) Tree Preservation Order 2021 - Didsbury West Ward**

The committee was asked to consider 1 objection made to this order relating to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) served at the above address on 1 Birch tree (T1) and 6 Callery Pear trees (T3 – T8) immediately adjacent to a car park on York Street, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 6UE.

The Planning Officer confirmed that this order had been before the Committee in November 2021.

A Local Ward Councillor stated they hoped members would confirm the Tree Preservation Order. They stated that residents were upset by the removal of trees in the car park opposite. The Local Ward Councillor themselves requested the Tree Preservation Orders to protect these trees from the same fate as they add value to the street scene.

Councillor Andrews moved the officer's recommendation to confirm the order. Councillor Richards seconded the proposal.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed the recommendation to confirm the order for the reasons outlined within the report.

(Councillor Leech declared a personal interest in the application but addressed the Committee as a ward councillor before leaving the meeting and taking no part in the consideration or vote.)





## **Standards Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2022**

#### **Present**

Independent Co-opted Member: Nicole Jackson – In the Chair

Councillors Connolly, Evans, Lanchbury, Simcock and Nunney  
Independent Co-opted Member: G Linnell

#### **Apologies:**

Councillor Andrews  
Ringway Parish Council: Councillor O'Donovan

#### **ST/22/06            Interests**

Independent Co-opted Member, Geoff Linnell declared that he is a serving councillor on Nether Alderley Parish Council. Although as non-voting members of the committee they are not subject to the rules on Disclosable Pecuniary Interests Nicole Jackson and Geoff Linnell, as Independent Members of the Standards Committee, declared an interest in the item '**Terms of Office of the Independent Members of the Standards Committee and the Independent Persons**'.

#### **ST/22/07            Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held 17 March 2022 were submitted for approval.

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2022 as a correct record.

#### **ST/22/08            Members Code of Conduct - Company Directorships**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer and City Solicitor that provided an overview of the governance / oversight mechanisms which provides assurance that appropriate standards in relation to the Council's Partnership arrangements are being upheld. The report focused on those matters within the remit of the Standards Committee, in particular on the training programme for Members who currently or will in the future take on a role as a director. The training package has been produced following work with The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The training sessions which have been ongoing focus on three key themes:

- Provision of clear guidance so that Members have an understanding of their responsibilities when undertaking a role as a Director;
- To ensure that there is a consistency of approach taken by those representing the Council in a Board setting;
- An opportunity to outline some of the key lessons learnt from other Local Authority companies and how Manchester is embedding a positive approach to good practice.

The Chair invited questions from Committee members.

A member referred the training packages as detailed in paragraph 2.5 of report and asked how long the training will take.

It was reported that the current training package has been developed and is provided by CIPFA colleagues. The refresher session is held over a half day and new directorship appointments will be held over a full due to the content to be covered.

A member asked if the training has been designed for those members appointed to positions by the Council or did it include those members who are not appointed by the Council but serve a member of a board of a smaller local organisation, because they are a councillor.

It was reported that the training had been focused on those members appointed by the Council to directorships, however the training can be extended for members acting in the roles as a member. Another area to be included in the training will be the role of trustees.

Officers were asked if there is an expectation for independent members to undertake the training if they are a director or a trustee. The Council currently has independent members serving on Scrutiny Committees and Audit Committee.

It was reported that this is not provided currently, but if this was considered beneficial, it could be an option to explore for inclusion of co-opted members in the training, if this would have a benefit to the work of the Council.

## **Decision**

To note the report submitted and the comments and suggestions raised.

### **ST/22/09          Annual Governance Statement (AGS)**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that presented the draft 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement (AGS), which has been produced following completion of the annual review of the Council's governance arrangements and systems of internal control.

Local authorities have a legal responsibility to conduct, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of their governance framework including their system of internal control. Following the review an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) must be produced, approved and published

The Draft AGS will be included in the Council's draft Accounts 2021/22 and will be submitted to Audit Committee on 26 July 2022.

The report was introduced by the Reform and Innovation Manager and reference was made to the amendments made to improve the layout and accessibility of the text

and information. The report referred to the governance challenges in 2021/22 and moving forwards to 2022/23.

## **Decision**

To note the report and the contents of the draft version of the Council's 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

### **ST/22/10      Review of the Operation and Efficacy of the Member/Officer Relations Protocol**

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor that provides an update to the Standards Committee on the operation and efficacy of the Member/Officer Relations Protocol. A copy of the current protocol was appended to the report. The protocol was reviewed in November 2021, when it was determined that no changes were required. Reference was made to paragraph 2.1 of the report and the view of the Monitoring Officer that the existing Protocol is well understood by elected Members and the Monitoring Officer is not aware of any queries or issues that have been addressed through existing procedures. This positive view is also reflected in the findings of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report. The Committee was informed that the Member /Officer Relations Protocol is covered in the newly elected member induction training.

The Committee was informed that protocol is now subject to annual review.

The Chair invited questions from the Committee.

A member asked if there had been any complaints received under the protocol.

The Monitoring Officer reported that no complaints had been received from officers against an elected member.

## **Decisions**

1. To note the position regarding the operation and efficacy of the Member/Officer Relations Protocol as detailed in the report submitted.
2. To endorse the proposed change to the review date section to reflect current practice of annual review of the Protocol.
3. To request the recirculation of the Operation and Efficacy of the Member/Officer Relations Protocol to all elected members, following its adoption by Council

### **ST/21/11      Review of the Operation and Efficacy of the Use of Resources Guidance for Members**

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor to provide an update on the operation and efficacy of the Use of Resources Guidance for Members. The Guidance is part of the Council Constitution's and as such is reviewed annually. The Head of Governance introduced the report and outlined the outcome of the latest

review of the Guidance had identified that clarity is required on the use of a councillor's council email address and council telephone, which are Council resources and should not be used on any campaign or election literature. In addition, it has been suggested that the importance of Information Security should be highlighted to elected members with the need for them to complete cyber training to promote the importance of cyber security. The review also updated the guidance to remove information that is no longer relevant.

The Chair invited questions from Committee members.

A member referred to the non-use by Councillors of their Council provided email addresses and phone numbers as detailed in paragraph 1.2 of the report and requested that it be stated within the guidance that this will apply to Councillors all year round and not just the period during local elections. It was confirmed this would be picked up in the Guidance.

### **Decisions**

1. To note the Monitoring Officer's views on the operation and efficacy of the Use of Resources Guidance for Members.
2. To endorse the inclusion, in Paragraph 2 of the Guidance (Resources general provisions), that the non-use of members Council provided email addresses and phone numbers for campaign or election literature purposes, will apply to Councillors all year round.
3. To recommend to full Council the adoption of the revised and amended guidance, as detailed in the report submitted.
4. To endorse the recirculation of the Use of Resources Guidance to all elected members, following its adoption by Council.

### **ST/21/12      Planning Protocol**

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor to advise on the operation and efficacy of the Planning Protocol. The Committee was advised that officers consider the Protocol is working effectively. A complaint received regarding a member had been rejected at Stage 1 of the investigation process. Four other complaints had been received regarding the conduct of ward members who are not members of the Planning and Highways Committee. The Committee was advised that officers will monitor the complaints and if required report on any potential amendments that may require consideration.

The Committee was advised that the proposed change to the cut-off time for the submission of late representations prior to the meeting of Planning and Highways Committee reported to the Standards Committee in November 2021 would be included in the review of the Council Constitution. The proposed cut-off time will be 4:00pm two days prior to the meeting of Planning and Highways Committee.

### **Decisions**

1. To note the position regarding the operation/efficacy of the Planning Protocol.
2. To note the potential amendment to the Planning Protocol.

### **ST/21/13      Dispensations**

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer concerning the review the operation and efficacy of the process for granting dispensations in relation to Members' Interests.

The Monitoring Officer had provided a view of the process and efficacy that stated there are no concerns regarding the level of requests for dispensations by Councillors.

#### **Decision**

To note the report.

### **ST/21/14      The Register of Members' Interests**

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer regarding the operation of the Register of Members' Interests. Elected members are required to notify Disclosable Pecuniary Interests to the Monitoring Officer, within 28 days of becoming a Councillor.

The Head of Governance reported that the Monitoring Officer considered that members are aware of the need to continually update their register and members will be provided with guidance regarding the declaration of interest at meetings.

#### **Decision**

To note the report.

### **ST/21/15      The Government Response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life's Review of Local Government Ethical Standards**

Consideration was given to the report of the City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer that advised the Committee of the Government's response to the report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) review of local government ethical standards.

The Monitoring Officer provided a comment on each of the Recommendations. The Committee was advised that a report would be submitted to the next meeting with recommendations regarding the Local Government Association (LGA) updated model code of conduct.

(\*The meeting was suspended at this point (11:00am) due to a fire alarm within the building requiring the room to be evacuated. The meeting resumed at 11:20am.)

#### **Decision**

1. To note the Government's response to the report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.
2. That the City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer submit a report to the next meeting of the Standards Committee with recommendations regarding the LGA updated model code of conduct.

#### **ST/21/16      Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members**

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer regarding the operation and efficacy of the Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members. The current threshold for the register of gifts and hospitality is £100. The report covered the period 1 October 2021 to 12 May 2022. The Committee was advised that it is proposed that the review of the guidance will take place annually, rather than the current three-year period.

The Lord Mayor's register of gifts and hospitality was appended to the report.

The Committee was advised that the Monitoring Officer was of the view that all members are aware of this requirement and does not consider that any amendment of the Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members is required at this time, other than to change the review date provision to reflect that the Guidance is reviewed annually.

#### **Decisions**

1. To note the Monitoring Officer's views on the efficacy and operation of the Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members.
2. Endorse the proposed change to the review date section of the Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members to reflect the current practice of annual review of the same

#### **ST/21/17      Work Programme**

The Committee considered the report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit that invited the members of the Standards Committee to consider its work programme for future meetings and make any revisions.

A member commented that the Committee should allow business to be submitted on to the Work Programme as required.

#### **Decision**

To note the report and agree the Work Programme.

(At this point, the Chair (Nicole Jackson) vacated the chair. Councillor Simcock chaired the meeting for the following item, due to the interest declared. See below.)

## **ST/21/18      Terms of Office of the Independent Members of the Standards Committee and the Independent Persons**

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer that sought the views of the Committee in relation to the terms of office of the two independent co-opted members of the Standards Committee and the Council's two Independent Persons.

The Committee was advised that the current terms of office of Nicolé Jackson and Geoff Linnell as Independent co-opted members of the Standards Committee date from November 2015. Sarah Beswick's appointment as Independent Person (IP) was on the same date and Alan Eastwood's appointment as Independent Person predates this. All appointments have been extended twice until 18 November 2022 whilst awaiting the Government's response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life's (CSPL) recommendation that the term of office of an IP should be limited to 2 years renewable once.

The government response is that it did not accept this recommendation as appropriate for legislation on the basis that it would be likely to be unworkable. The government's view is that it would be more appropriately implemented as a best practice recommendation for local authorities. Discussions with Monitoring Officers indicate that in practice most local authorities would likely find servicing this rate of turnover unachievable. When local authorities have found effective [IPs] who demonstrate the capability, judgement and integrity required for this quite demanding yet unpaid role, it is understandable that they may be reluctant to place limitations on the appointment.

The Monitoring Officer requested the Committee to agree to existing appointments for a further 4-year period and to recruit an additional Independent Person to enable provision of support to members where more than one member is the subject of a complaint.

The Chair invited the Committee to comment on the report.

A member made the point that recruitment may be difficult due to the nature of the role and the experience and skills required and proposed that two Independent Persons be appointed to provide more flexibility for the Council.

The Monitoring Officer agreed that appointing two Independent Persons would be appropriate and advised the Committee that there is no limit on the number to appoint.

### **Decisions**

1. The Committee endorsed the reappointment of Nicolé Jackson and Geoff Linnell (the two independent co-opted members of the Standards Committee) and Alan Eastwood and Sarah Beswick (the Council's two Independent Persons) for a further four-year term, provided they are agreeable to this extension

2. To refer the proposed reappointment of the two independent co-opted members of the Standards Committee and the Council's two Independent Persons to the Constitutional and Nominations Committee and Full Council for a decision to be taken regarding the potential extensions of their terms of office.
3. The Committee endorsed the proposal to advertise and interview for an additional two Independent Person positions and in the event if vacancies arise, advertise and interview to other vacant roles to enable recommendations to full Council on this matter.

(Nicole Jackson and Geoff Linnell, as Independent Members of the Standards Committee, declared an interest in the item and left the meeting before it was considered and did not participate in consideration of the item of business.)