

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 10 January 2019
Subject: Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy
Report of: Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

Summary

This report provides an overview of work undertaken and progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the Our Manchester Strategy for those areas within the portfolio of the Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note and comment on the report.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Our Manchester Strategy was formally adopted by the Council in January 2016 and sets the ambitions for the city for the next ten years, to 2025, for Manchester to be:

- Thriving – creating great jobs and healthy businesses
- Filled with talent – both home-grown talent and attracting the best in the world
- Fair – with equal chances for all to unlock their potential
- A great place to live – with lots of things to do
- Buzzing with connections – including world-class transport and broadband

1.2 Executive Members are collectively and individually responsible for supporting the delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy and for providing political oversight and direction to officers to deliver better outcomes for Manchester residents. In May the Executive published its collective political priorities in the Labour Party's Our Manchester Manifesto. These are in line with the Our Manchester Strategy and individual Executive Members have aligned their own priorities to the manifesto commitments.

1.3 This report sets out how I as the Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources aim to deliver on and update the Committee on these priorities over the next 12 months. This is the latest update report to this Committee.

2. Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

2.1 As the Executive Member for Finance and Human resources I have responsibility for the Council's Finances, Budget, Council Tax and Benefits, Resource Procurement, Performance, ICT, Capital and Capital Programme Delivery, Social Value and Digital Transformation.

2.2 In addition to being the lead portfolio holder in the above areas I also sit on the board in some of the Council's other major projects and partnership arrangements. These include:

- Town Hall Transformation (OTH board)
- The Factory
- MHCC Finance Committee
- MCDA (Manchester Creative Digital Assets)

2.3 In line with the 2018 Manifesto and the Our Manchester Strategy I will be responsible for delivering the above with an emphasis on the following priorities:

- Delivering the second of a three year budget focusing on Our Manchester Objectives and setting a balanced budget for the final year, 2019/20.
- Social value and best value for money

- Ensuring we protect Manchester Residents
- Supporting HR deliver the objectives of Our People Strategy

3. Objectives over the Next 12 Months

Budget

- 3.1 In March 2017 the Council set its three year budget based around the Central Government allocation which removed a further £35m from council resources over this period. This is in addition to the previous round of cuts which started in 2010 with the coalition government. In total over the last 8 years the Council has lost c£350m in real terms. With a growing population and a national shortfall in local government resource, including Health and Social Care, this has put pressure on the Council's budget in these areas.
- 3.2 If we are to deliver the manifesto it is imperative that we ensure the three year budget plan is delivered. The Manifesto is ambitious but more importantly it reflects the priorities Manchester residents have asked of us.
- 3.3 At my last report to committee I reported a projected overspend in the budget of £13.7m and that I had instigated several rounds of Council priority conversations to focus on a budget recovery plan bringing the budget back in line whilst maintaining the Council's ambitions.
- 3.4 Over the last 8 months I have held several Priority Conversations with Strategic Directors and Executive Members to get a reflection of the contemporary situation and what problems may arise that may affect the budget. These have focused on both Revenue and Capital Spending, Social Value and how these relate to delivering the Executive priorities. The work has supported the development and delivery of the recovery plan and associated reduction in overspend.

Social Value and Ethical Procurement

- 3.5 SV (Social Value) is a new portfolio brief. It used to sit within procurement, however, this year SV is a portfolio area in its own right. This will further the work already done by the council in previous years allowing, not only allowing a real sense of focus on SV but allowing a more holistic approach.
- 3.6 Manchester has one of, if not the best, social value policy in the country, with a procurement weighting of 20% alongside that of cost and quality. This is the highest of all authorities. Over the last few months I have driven our SV agenda and it is now a Council priority across all directorates. Examples of this have been reported to the Ethical Procurement and SV sub group.
- 3.7 Unfortunately, communication around SV and our achievements is still not as robust as it could be, often meaning our success in this area is not recognised as it is in other authorities whose modelling is based upon our own. In the new year

it has been agreed with communications that we will do a takeover week on all of our social media platforms around SV which will give real life examples of how the policy is making a difference to people's lives. There will also be our annual SV conference in February which I will be chairing and we will be using this to promote our work further.

- 3.8. I attend the SV board chaired by Paul Marshall the Director of Children's services to hear how the policy we as a council have put in place is operating in practice. In addition I have now set up a strategic group that sits above this working on how we align our SV policy with our long term vision for the City and looking at issues such as communications and KPI monitoring.

Ensuring We Protect Manchester Citizens

- 3.8 Since the Lib-Dem Tory Coalition in 2010, central Government have made poor people poorer and put those most in need of support at risk. The 2017 Budget consultation made it clear that residents of the City wanted the Council to prioritise how we look after certain groups in our City and in the Our Manchester approach. The 2018 Labour Party Manifesto reflected this. We are all responsible for delivering this vision, however as previously mentioned, certain manifesto priorities fall within the relevant portfolio holders brief.
- 3.9 The main role in the manifesto for the Executive member for Finance and HR is supporting other Executive Members to deliver their priorities. However, one of the areas I have responsibility for is Revenue and Benefits. My focus in this area will be looking at how we can help mitigate against the issues arising from the spectacularly failed UC (Universal Credit) roll out. Using what tools we have at our disposal to support our most vulnerable, I will be working closely with officers and other Executive Members to look at ways in which this can be done. We are looking at some options around how we can further support residents which will be reported back to this Committee later in the year.
- 3.10 As set out in my last report, one of the pledges within the Manifesto was to adopt a policy to exempt care leavers from council tax liabilities until their 25th (previously 21st) birthday. This is now Council policy
- 3.11 Whilst the budget has been hard to balance this year, it remains essential to see how the Council can help protect those individuals who have been hardest hit by UC. Further measures have been put in place including in the Council Tax Support Scheme where we are currently consulting on implementing a banded scheme to stop countless reassessments and stress to individuals who have moved onto UC. In addition, we are looking at how the discretionary council tax support for those on CTSS can be applied to support people hardest hit, including those who have three or more children.

Supporting HR deliver the objectives of Our People Strategy

- 3.14 I am meeting with the Director of HROD once a month to discuss progress within the service, in addition to ad hoc meetings around specific issues.
- 3.12 The last Be Heard Survey has now been completed and we are going over the results. The last results showed that the Council was continuing to make progress and I am pleased to say that this is still the case with the results showing both an increased response rate and an improved overall score. There has been progress in a number of the areas of concern raised in the last report but there is still more work to be done.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The report has detailed some of the activities I have taken in the 8 months I have been a member of the Executive, but also sets out some of the priorities I am undertaking over the coming months. Whilst not explicit, I hope that the report sets out the ultimate priority which is ensuring that we get the best deal for Manchester residents and allow them to partake in the City's success.