

## **Executive**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 18 January 2023**

**Present:** Councillor Craig (Chair)

**Councillors:** Akbar, Bridges, Hacking, Igbon, Midgley, Rahman, Rawlins, T Robinson, and White

**Also present as Members of the Standing Consultative Panel:**

**Councillors:** Ahmed Ali, Butt, Douglas, Foley, Johnson, Leech, Lynch and Stanton

**Apologies:** Councillor Collins

**Also present:** Councillor Newman (Woodhouse Park Ward Member) and Councillor Reid (Gorton and Abbey Hey Ward Member)

#### **Exe/23/1 Minutes**

##### **Decision**

The Executive approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 14 December 2022.

#### **Exe/23/2 Our Manchester Progress Update**

The Executive considered a report of the Chief Executive which provided an update on key areas of progress against the Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025 which reset Manchester’s priorities for the next five years to ensure the Council could still achieve the city’s ambition set out in the Our Manchester Strategy 2016 – 2025.

The Leader reported that the Council had entered into legal agreements with development partner Allied London for the Grade II-listed Upper Campfield Market and Lower Campfield Market buildings on Liverpool Road. Campfield was one of two schemes which together formed the Culture In The City project which the Council secured almost £20m of Government Levelling Up funding in autumn 2021. The Campfield market buildings would provide 83,000 sq. ft. of modern workspace and over a 15-year period, it was anticipated that 1,600 jobs would be created and a further 2,400 jobs sustained.

The Leader also reported that Manchester Libraries would be providing support for residents who need it to help navigate through new voter ID rules which will come into force ahead of the 4 May local elections. All 22 libraries in the city would offer free internet and wifi which residents could use if they needed to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate. Staff would be able to advise which forms of photo identification could be used at polling stations to avoid people applying for a Certificate unnecessarily. A Greater Manchester-wide communications campaign to make people aware of the changes and the need to ensure they had voter ID to participate in elections would amplify and supplement a national campaign being led by the Electoral Commission.

The Executive Member for Children, Families and Young People reported that a Trust had been appointed to run what will be the first new primary school to open in the city centre in almost 20 years. The Laurus Trust would run the 210-place Crown Street Primary School. Building work was now well underway on its location at the end of Deansgate, with the first pupils expected through its doors in September 2024. The school would form an important part of the wider regenerations taking place in the Great Jackson Street area at the southern end of the city centre.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport reported that strong progress had been made in reducing carbon emissions from the council's estate of more than 300 buildings. Emissions from the Council's operational estate had reduced by 7,161 tonnes CO2 per annum – a 29.7% cut – since 2019/20. It was referenced that a detailed report on the Decarbonisation of the Council's estate had been considered at the January meeting of Resources and Governance Scrutiny and the Executive Member for Environment and Transport encouraged members to read this report to get a fuller understanding of the work being done

## **Decision**

The Executive note the report.

## **Exe/23/3 Capital Programme Update**

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

The proposals which only required Executive approval were those which were funded by the use of external resources, use of capital receipts, use of reserves below £10.0m, where the proposal could be funded from existing revenue budgets or where the use of borrowing on a spend to save basis is required. The following proposals required Executive approval for changes to the City Council's capital programme:-

- Children's Services - New Secondary SEND School. A capital budget virement of £18.1m was requested, funded from Unallocated Special Educational Needs Grant to develop a new 150 place secondary SEND school for pupils aged 11-19 with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) in north Manchester.
- Highways Services – Rochdale Canal. A capital budget virement of £0.230m in 2022/23 was requested, funded from borrowing to deliver improvements to the towpath in Newton Heath and Miles Platting, which would include patching and resurfacing to the towpath, repairs to the cobbled areas, new marker posts to indicate distances and new signage at accesses and exits to advertise local amenities.
- Highways Services – Safer Streets Manchester Cycleway. A capital budget increase of £0.030m in 2022/23 and £0.293m in 2023/24 was requested,

funded by External Contribution – Safer Streets Fund, alongside a capital budget virement of £0.220m in 2022/23, funded by borrowing via the Highways Project Delivery Fund, to deliver a number of improvements including landscaping, removal, and addition of new barriers, new access points and signage on the Manchester Cycleway (Fallowfield loop and Yellow Brick Road) to help improve safety and perception of safety along the route.

- ICT – Contract Management. A capital budget decrease of £0.109m was requested and approval of a corresponding transfer of £0.109m to the revenue budget, funded by Capital Fund to introduce an ICT system for managing contracts across the whole Council, providing numerous benefits, including a central repository of all contract information, enabling recording of risks and issues, and contract management and performance information to be recorded.

The report highlighted that there had been increases to the programme totalling £4.002m as a result of delegated approvals since the previous report to the Executive on 14 December 2022.

Approval had also been given for the following capital budget virements:-

- £0.490m for the installation of Carbon Monoxide Monitors in council properties to comply with the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022, through the utilisation of Unallocated Public Sector Housing budget.
- £0.026m allocation from the Parks Development Programme for the predevelopment stage to commission the Capital Programmes and Procurement Team to progress scheme design to RIBA Stage 2 for the Heaton Park Orangery
- £0.110m funding for Cringle Park – Grounded Coffee Offer to improve the existing offer in the park
- £0.700m allocation from Education Basic Need funding of to provide additional funding to Our Lady's RC High School and Manchester Enterprise Academy to deliver additional school places

If the recommendations in the report were approved the General Fund capital budget would increase by £0.214m across financial years which would also result in an increase in the prudential indicator for Capital Expenditure in corresponding years.

Councillor Leech sought an assurance that the proposed budget for the new Secondary SEND School had taken account of any potential inflationary costs so to avoid the need to seek further funding at a future point.

Councillor Johnson sought assurance that the consideration of carbon reduction was taken into account with any ICT projects.

The Deputy Chief Executive commented that there was a substantial allowance for inflation and contingency associated with the new Secondary SEND School budget and that all ICT projects took account of how they could contribute to carbon reductions..

## **Decisions**

The Executive:-

- (1) Approve the following changes to the Council's capital programme:
  - Children's Services - New Secondary Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) School – Varley Street. A capital budget virement of £18.1m, funded from Unallocated Special Educational Needs Grant.
  - Highways Services – Rochdale Canal. A capital budget virement of £0.230m funded from borrowing.
  - Highways Services – Safer Streets – Manchester Cycleway. A capital budget increase of £0.323m, funded by External Contribution and a capital budget virement of £0.220m, funded by borrowing via the Highways Project Delivery Fund.
  - ICT – Contract Management. A capital budget decrease of £0.109m and a corresponding transfer of £0.109m to the revenue budget, funded by Capital Fund.
- (2) Note the increases to the programme of £4.002m as a result of delegated approvals and the virements in the programme of £1.326m as a result of virements from approved budgets

## **Exe/23/4 Making Manchester Fairer - the Anti-Poverty Strategy 2023-2028**

The Executive considered a report of the Strategic Director (Growth and Development), which provided an overview of the work undertaken to date to develop a refreshed poverty strategy for the city and set out the approach, evidence base and engagement process for developing the strategy. The report also outlined the relationship between the new strategy and existing work on Making Manchester Fairer, developing a more inclusive economy, tackling the Cost-of-Living Crisis and other linked areas of work.

The Deputy Leader reported that Manchester had long recognised the significant challenge of tackling and reducing poverty in the city. In 2017, a Family Poverty Strategy was launched which focused on families with children and young people up to the age of 19. A significant amount of partnership work was undertaken to deliver the Family Poverty Strategy in the last five years, against a backdrop of health and economic challenges which had highlighted and exacerbated poverty in Manchester.

The new Anti-Poverty Strategy provided an opportunity to take account of the impact of these challenges and extend the strategy to cover all households in the city to

include those without children. Extensive research and engagement work had taken place with residents and partners to determine the main themes and priorities for the new strategy:-

- Preventing Poverty
- Mitigating Poverty
- Pathways out of Poverty
- Inclusive and effective delivery

Learning from the experience with the Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022 and considering the information that had been gathered from research and conversations with partners, there was an opportunity to make some changes to the governance for the new strategy to ensure that it was as effective as it could be. The strategy would be led by a Making Manchester Fairer and Anti-Poverty Programme Management Team made up of council officers and partners. Delivery would ultimately be accountable to the Making Manchester Fairer Programme Board and would be undertaken through partnership working and collaboration between Manchester's Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and public sector institutions with the support of the city's private sector.

Measuring the impact and success of the new strategy would be challenging due to external factors beyond the Council's control. The worsening economic context was likely to put pressure on household budgets in the medium term, whilst constraining the ability of the Council and our partners to deliver effective services. Additionally, the action that could be taken was already limited in scope when compared to the scale and complexity of the factors driving poverty in Manchester.

In response to these challenges, a series of indicators had been selected which would assist in identifying the risk of people experiencing poverty, and the volume and need of individuals accessing certain services. This would help the Council understand how external factors were likely to drive demand and adapt its collective approach in response to changing needs.

The current economic challenges and rising inflation meant that poverty was going to continue to be a significant issue in Manchester for several years to come. Manchester had a robust system and network of professionals and organisations who remained committed to this issue, and who worked together to ensure that everything possible was being done to reduce the number of people experiencing poverty.

It was also recognised that in some areas the Council's powers to tackle poverty were limited, and the Council was prepared to work with its partners to identify new solutions and ways of working to maximise the collective impact on this issue. Where the Council did not have the powers locally, it would continue to make the case to Government for the legislative changes that were required to create the right conditions to effectively reduce poverty in the city.

Councillor Leech questioned the impact of the Family Poverty Strategy and the measurements of success insofar as to how many people who had received help and support were no longer deemed to be living in poverty. He also made a suggestion that to help families living in poverty the Council should consider increasing the

amount of financial support available through the Council Tax Support Scheme from the current maximum of 82.5% to 100%.

The Director of Inclusive Economy explained how the Council measured the impact of the actions and initiatives put in place through the Strategy and the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer explained that there was a significant lead in period to making changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme but it had been suggested by Government that for 2024/25 the Council should consider its current Council Tax Support Scheme and whether the threshold levels remained appropriate.

Councillor Johnson commented on the need to help ensure food banks had appropriate support and funding to continue to help those who relied on these through the cost of living crisis.

## **Decision**

The Executive agree to adopt the new Anti-Poverty Strategy for Manchester.

### **Exe/23/5 Revised Policy for Residents Parking Schemes**

The Executive considered a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods), which sought approval of a revised policy around the implementation and operation of Residents Parking Zones (RPZ) within the city. The revised policy reflected the feedback and issues that have been gathered during the process of extending the Christie Resident Parking Scheme and in the design of other planned schemes.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport reported that the Residents Parking Scheme (RPS) Policy was last considered in September 2018. The existing policy had evolved over time in response to parking issues in neighbourhoods. The recent review had highlighted that the current policy created issues within the design of the schemes, primarily because of the approach taken to visitor parking.

The primary changes proposed were:-

- Provision of two (previously one) free (previously £45 per annum) digital visitor permits for all residents, that can be managed within the online system.
- Option for transferrable paper permits for those without digital access.
- Provision of physical temporary parking permits (scratch cards) to all residents in addition to the permits. A number of scratch cards would be provided free to each household per annum, with further scratch cards available at an additional charge.

It was explained that the overall approach was to promote the management of visitor permits online consistent with providing better and more efficient services through the Council's Digital Front Door. This also facilitated significant efficiencies within both enforcement activities and administration of the schemes.

The policy also amended the approach to businesses to ensure that each business impacted will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This was to reflect the potential diversity between businesses and their relative needs in order to operate sustainably.

The revised policy would be applied to all current and future resident parking zones. The enforcement of resident parking schemes would also be subject to review and monitoring. It was necessary to ensure that the resources deployed were proportionate to the scale of non-compliance, therefore, regular reviews would be conducted in each area to determine the level of non-compliance and the level of enforcement resource required.

Councillors Stanton welcomed the extension of the Christie Resident Parking Scheme and the fact that the Council had listened to feedback from local residents to ensure the scheme had been appropriately thought through.

Councillor Leech commented that he felt that issues that were now being resolved associated with extension of the Christie Resident Parking Scheme could have been avoided. He also welcomed the proposals around business permits and raised a concern that the scratch card system could be open to abuse if these were not parking scheme specific scratch cards.

The Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) acknowledged the points made in association with the extension of the Christie Resident Parking Scheme and the concern around the scratch card system.

## **Decision**

The Executive agree the revised policy.

### **Exe/23/6 Wythenshawe Civic Centre Development Framework**

The Executive considered a report of the Strategic Director (Growth and Development), which provided an update on the next stages of the transformation of Wythenshawe Civic Centre.

The Executive Member for Growth and Development reported that the principles of the proposed Development Framework for Wythenshawe Civic Centre had been informed by the recent public consultations. The framework set out a long-term regeneration vision that would guide investment and would transform the Civic Centre,

The Development Framework had been prepared to guide future regeneration and redevelopment in the Civic Centre. This included long-term aspirations for the rebalancing between retail, community and residential functions, aimed at creating a sustainable Civic Centre that widened its uses and provided an improved environment.

The Council's aim was to create a vibrant centre that was appropriate for Wythenshawe in 2023 by increasing and diversifying its offer, driving new footfall, increasing visitors spend and capturing opportunities for considerable economic growth. Vacant and underused office and retail buildings would be brought back in to use as new business, community and creative spaces. A new food hall would be developed with access to local, affordable, sustainable produce and an evening food

and beverage economy would be introduced. New, improved public realm would be sustainably drained and naturally planted, designed to be accessible and to encourage walking and cycling.

The Development Framework would also act as the guide for future investment and elements also informed the Levelling Up Fund application submitted in 2022 with the outcome of the Round 2 bids expected at the end of January 2023

If approved, the Development Framework would be formally adopted to guide future investment and the regeneration of Wythenshawe Civic Centre. Work had commenced exploring procurement options in relation to an investment and development partner. A further report would be submitted to Executive once this implementation strategy had been finalised.

Councillor Newman (Ward Councillor) addressed the Executive, stating his complete support for the long-term aspirations for Wythenshawe and the Civic Centre, recognising that investment and improvement had been long overdue.

The Strategic Director (Growth and Development) advised that subject to approval, the Council would be progressing with the appointment of a development partner to help move the redevelopment forward and in the short term progressing a commercial lettings strategy to fill some of the remaining vacant units.

Councillor Johnson welcomed the proposals and commented on the level of responses to the consultation process and the need to ensure there would be more social housing provided for Wythenshawe residents.

Councillor Leech sought clarification on the mix tenure of social housing that would be delivered as part of this Development Framework.

## **Decisions**

The Executive:-

- (1) Note the outcome of the results of the public consultation on the Development Framework for Wythenshawe Civic Centre.
- (2) Approve the Development Framework for Wythenshawe Civic Centre and that the Council take its Framework into account as a material consideration when considering planning applications for the site.

## **Exe/23/7 Gorton District Centre Development Framework**

The Executive considered a report of the Strategic Director (Growth and Development), which provided an update on the on the future plans to regenerate Gorton District Centre and the outcome of the public consultation that had informed it.

The Executive Member for Growth and Development reported that the Development Framework was being prepared to guide future regeneration and redevelopment in the District Centre. This included, but was not limited to, long-term aspirations to



maximise the potential of the centre through creating a more attractive environment that was more comfortable for residents/visitors to dwell in, extending the periods of activity of residents and visitors within the centre, beyond the traditional Monday to Friday 9am-5pm, encouraging more diversity through an increased provision of commercial offers and opportunities to deliver 400 new homes on brownfield land with a mixed tenure approach that matches local housing demand.

Consultation with thirty local businesses was carried out October 2022 and a public consultation was held online from 9 December 2022 to 6 January 2023. Overall, the consultation feedback was very much supportive of the objectives for the Gorton district centre.

92% of responses supported the objective of creating a more attractive environment that was comfortable to spend time in. Several respondents felt that the indoor market, as an asset to Gorton, had a good selection of stalls, but that the exterior of the building was unwelcoming and needed improvement. The wider commercial offer was noted to be limited by available space and that a diversified retail offer was welcomed.

87.5% of responses were supportive of extending periods of activity with a particular aspiration for new uses during evenings and at weekends and supported the diversification of uses that would appeal to different communities and age groups with reference to a lack of space for younger people. 81.6% of respondents supported making the centre more accessible by walking and cycling, especially through the improvement of non-car dominated connections north to the surrounding housing estates, south to Sunny Brow Park and west to Debdale Park. Additional comments were made in support of safer road crossings and cycle lanes, especially when crossing Hyde Road and accessing the new Gorton Hub. Furthermore, 87.5% of respondents supported the objective to make the centre greener, with comments regarding aspirations for new tree planting.

Following this feedback a number of amendments had been made to the draft Framework:-

- Early engagement indicated strong community feeling regarding any plans for the redevelopment of the existing gymnastics site. Amendments had been made within the document that any redevelopment would be subject to identification and delivery of a new futureproofed facility.
- Aspirations were very clear about the ability for the redevelopment of the town centre to unlock opportunities to walk and cycle as oppose to drive. Strong linear connections to the adjacent neighbourhoods had been incorporated, footpaths had been widened and Garratt Way now included a best-in-class segregated cycle way.
- Along with better pedestrian crossings across highways, the carriageway width on surrounding secondary roads had been narrowed. Improved lighting on all existing and new footpaths will improve perceptions along with improvements to the market frontage providing natural surveillance.

- Respondents agreed with the principle of promoting the historical Garratt Way as the new focus of the town centre and the framework proposes a new town square, reconnecting the indoor market back and providing opportunities for an outdoor makers market or facilitation of community events.
- It was also recognised that Gorton was well connected to the local public transport network yet the town centre currently felt disconnected to the nearest station. Improvements had been proposed to the public realm from Chapman Street along with new development investment to animate uses and build density running towards the new town square.

The feedback, engagement with stakeholders and local businesses had been invaluable in informing the formation of the future plans for Gorton District Centre. The interventions and future development opportunities outlined in the proposed framework would guide future investment in Gorton. And would provide a town centre that met the local community aspirations along with unlocking opportunities for new homes and employment.

Councillor Reid (Ward Councillor) addressed the Executive, stating her complete support for the long-term aspirations for Gorton District Centre, recognising that investment and improvement had been long overdue.

## **Decisions**

The Executive:-

- (1) Note the outcome of the results of the public consultation on the Development Framework Gorton District Centre.
- (2) Approve the Development Framework for Gorton District Centre and request that Planning and Highways Committee take the Development Framework into account as a material consideration when considering planning applications with Gorton District Centre.

## **Exe/23/8 Large Scale Renewable Energy Generation - Solar Farm Purchase (Part A)**

The Executive considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, which provided an update on the progress of negotiation and Due Diligence for the purchase of a Large-Scale Renewable Energy Generation Project to help ensure the Council could achieve the CO2 savings as set out in the Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2025.

In January 2022 Executive granted delegation for the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, in consultation with the Leader, Executive Member for Finance and the Executive Member for Environment to negotiate for the purchase of a solar asset / PPA and any associated corporate documentation to establish a Special Purpose Vehicle if required. The report also highlighted the need to seek further capital approvals to increase the Council's borrowing limit, via full council approval, if a binding offer were to be made to purchase a large-scale generation asset.

It was explained that the volatility in the energy markets linked to the war in Ukraine, combined with uncertain government energy policy over the summer and autumn of 2022 including a likely Government ban on new solar farm developments (since abandoned) plus the financial volatility arising from the UK Government's short-lived financial policies of September 2022 had all contributed to a volatile market over the past 12 months. During this period, the Council had tracked the market for suitable sites and explored potential options when they had become available. These events had also very much shifted the balance in favour of asset purchase as it offered a number of key advantages:

In November 2022, officers identified a suitable large scale solar PV facility available for purchase and submitted an initial non-binding offer to the developer. This offer had been accepted by the developer and the Council had been invited to submit a final offer. The developer required all bidders to clearly state that their internal approvals required were in place for their Final Offer. For the Council, this included Executive approval and for the capital budget increase and borrowing requirement, full Council approval. These approvals would be conditional on the outcomes of the due diligence and negotiations. If the Council's final offer was accepted, the Council would be granted exclusivity to complete full detailed due diligence following which a further report would be submitted to Executive

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer commented that the acquisition of a large-scale solar generation asset would give the early guarantee of long-term access to direct supply of renewable electricity generation, immediate overall CO2 reduction and significant financial certainty of future electricity prices to be paid by the Council.

Based on the projected energy demand assumptions, progress to both achieving the interim target of 50% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025 and to our long-term science-based target to be Zero Carbon by 2038 at the latest had been mapped. The modelling showed that, if the proposed solar farm was to come online as expected by the developer in early 2024 and generate the projected levels of electricity, the Council would meet its target to halve its CO2 emissions by 2025. The renewable electricity produced should also considerably accelerate the Council's progress to meeting its 2038 targets in the following years, particularly between 2025 and 2030. After 2025, the effect of the solar farm would become less pronounced, as government-projected decarbonisation of the National Grid reached a consistently high level, although progress on National Grid decarbonisation was a variable outside of the Council's control. Without a source of renewable energy, achievement of the Council's Zero Carbon 2038 objective would be largely dependent upon National Grid Decarbonisation.

In the event that this or another suitable solar farm purchase of c.50MW was not secured, the impact would need to be mitigated via seeking to purchase renewable electricity through other means such as via a PPA,. With energy markets currently in a state of high uncertainty PPA costs would have risen sharply and did not offer the same long term price hedge and security of supply offered by the large-scale generation option.

## **Decision**

The Executive note the report and that further details and recommendations are set out in Part B to this report.

### **Exe/23/9 Exclusion of Press and Public**

### **Exe/23/10 Large Scale Renewable Energy Generation - Solar Farm Purchase (Part B)**

The Executive considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, which provided details around the commercial, financial and legal arrangements in respect of the purchase of a Large-Scale Renewable Energy Generation Project.

## **Decisions**

The Executive:-

- (1) Recommend to Council approval of a capital budget increase of a maximum of £50m funded by borrowing on an invest to save basis, noting that the purchase will only progress if the Council is successful in its submission and it can be demonstrated that there are sufficient revenue savings to fund the capital financing costs.
- (2) Endorse the proposal to submit a final offer for the purchase of a solar farm.
- (3) Note if the bid submission is successful the Council will enter into a period of exclusivity to undertake further detailed due diligence with a further report to be brought back to the Executive for approval at a later date
- (4) Note the indicative timetable for submission and completion of the transaction as set out in the report.
- (5) Note that should the bid be unsuccessful an update will be provided to Executive