

# **Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 5 December 2023**

### **Present:**

Councillor Johns – in the Chair  
Councillors Abdullatif, Benham, Hussain, Northwood, Richards, I Robinson, Shilton  
Godwin and Taylor

### **Also present:**

Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Finance and Resources  
Councillor Moran, Deputy Executive Member for Finance and Resources  
Councillor Rawlins, Executive Member for Environment and Transport  
Councillor White, Executive Member for Housing and Development  
Andy Clarke, Manchester Airport  
Chris Woodroofe, Manchester Airport  
Christopher Coleman, Network Rail  
David Hoggarth, Transport for the North  
Simon Elliot, Transport for Greater Manchester  
Paul Galloway, Morgan Sindall  
Mark Hodgkinson, Biffa  
Katie Mowat, Biffa

### **Apologies:**

Councillor Iqbal

### **ERSC/23/52 Minutes**

#### **Decision**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

### **ERSC/23/53 Manchester Airport**

The Committee received a report of the Director of City Centre Growth and Infrastructure which provided an update on the role of Manchester Airport in the economy of the city; the current economic situation of the Airport following the impact of COVID-19; and the next steps in the economic future for the Airport.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Manchester Airport operational update;
- Economic impact of Manchester Airport;
- Investment in infrastructure;
- Investment in employment, education, and skills;
- Airport City update; and
- Forward look.

Chris Woodroofe, Managing Director of Manchester Airport delivered a short presentation on the Airport, including its operational performance, its economic impact, transformation work, engagement with the local community and apprenticeship opportunities.

Key points and queries that arose from the Committee's discussions included:

- The economic impact and benefits of the Airport on Wythenshawe and to request that, when the Committee received a further report from the Airport, it include a narrative on this;
- Public transport links to the Airport, including a question about Metrolink expansion, and the impact of congestion;
- Public transport connectivity at Airport City;
- The implications of the Transformation Programme by 2025;
- Managing risk related to future changes in the aviation industry due to a move to a net zero future;
- The customer experience and perceptions of this;
- The workforce, including the areas that staff were recruited from, pathways for staff to progress their careers, restrictions on employing staff with a criminal record and whether the post-pandemic recruitment and training issues had been resolved;
- Noting that the Airport had become an accredited Real Living Wage employer, did this apply to procured services as well; and
- The Airport's longer-term financial position.

A Member who was the Chair of the Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee informed Members that her Committee would be receiving a report on Manchester Airport and Aviation Emissions at its meeting on 11 January 2024 and she invited all Members of this Committee to attend.

Chris Woodroofe outlined some of the work taking place with the local community in Wythenshawe, including schools engagement, which prioritised Wythenshawe schools, engagement with the local community and local Ward Councillors and involvement in the multi-agency taskforce for the area. He reported that the people assisted by the Manchester Airport Academy to return to work after a period out of work were from the local community. He offered to provide the Member with further information on the economic benefits of the Airport for Wythenshawe after the meeting. He explained that the Transformation Programme would revolutionise the passenger experience and enable the airport to make full use of its existing runway infrastructure, highlighting the expected increase in passenger numbers, increase in GVA (Gross Value Added) and additional jobs created. He reported that the aviation industry in the UK was committed to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and was confident of being on track to meet this target, advising that Manchester Airport was a founding member of the Jet Zero Council. He informed Members about plans for sustainable aviation fuel, including proposals to turn the Council's black bin bag waste into jet fuel. He informed Members of the commitment for the Airport itself to be net zero by 2038 and stated that he was confident that this was achievable. He recognised the Member's point about public transport connections to jobs at Airport City and advised that he would look into that issue outside of the meeting.

Andy Clarke, Head of Corporate Affairs at Manchester Airport reported that the Airport shared Members' disappointment about the decision in relation to HS2. He informed Members that the Rail Minister had visited the Airport since the decision was announced and that the Airport was being included as one of the northern leaders engaged with over the future of the network in the north. He advised that, while it was too early to comment on a Metrolink expansion, the Airport was working on a response to the Minister on what it would want to see delivered from the funding package for the northern transport network and he offered to share this information with Members once it was available.

Chris Woodroffe reported that, with increased east-west connectivity, the number of passengers who could travel to the Airport by rail would increase by 50%. In response to a question about congestion, he reported that the Airport's Transformation Programme included investment in the road network around Terminal 2 and that there was a capacity cap on the Airport until additional roadworks were done. He stated that he would welcome a coherent scheme, involving east-west rail, national highways and government investment, to address congestion.

Chris Woodroffe informed Members that the experience of customers at Manchester Airport had improved since the summer of 2022 and that 90% of passengers surveyed now rated their experience as good or better. He reported that the Airport now had a stable workforce which had enabled them to deliver one of their best performances in the summer of 2023. He outlined how Manchester Airports Group was investing in its airports, firstly at Manchester Airport and then at London Stansted, which would benefit the Council as one of the owners. In terms of the longer-term financial position, he reported that the views of the Credit Rating Agency and the over-subscription of the Airport's corporate bond were positive indicators that investors saw the Airport as a good investment. He offered to share with Committee Members the Arup report on Manchester Airport's impact on the wider economy, society and its potential to drive future prosperity across the North. He reported that there were already examples of employees who had built their careers at the Airport but that there was always more to be done on providing pathways for career progression. He informed Members that there were some jobs at the Airport which, for security reasons, had rules around employing people with criminal records but that most criminal records, except for very serious crimes, expired after a certain period and that there were a lot of land-side jobs available at the Airport which these restrictions did not apply to. In response to a question from the Chair, he reported that the Border Force at Manchester Airport had been working well this summer and he cited the benefits of electronic gates in speeding up the process. He clarified that the Airport paid the Border Force to employ additional staff to provide the Fast Track Service, with passengers paying the Airport to use the service. He recognised a comment by the Chair about public transport access to the Visitor Park, stating that he would look into this.

Andy Clarke reported that the Real Living Wage employer status related to partners providing direct services to the Airport, such as the company which had the cleaning contract, but not to, for example, the airlines; however, he stated that the Airport led by example. In response to a question from the Chair about retail and hospitality businesses at the Airport, Chris Woodroffe reported that they were encouraged to

pay the Real Living Wage but the Airport could not force them to do so; however, he advised that, by the Airport paying its cleaners the Real Living Wage, it put pressure on other employers at the Airport to compete with those wage levels.

In response to questions about public transport connectivity, the Executive Member for Environment and Transport reported that the Bee Network, with franchised bus services, would be in place in south Manchester in 2025 and that Members could speak to her about gaps in public transport services. She informed the Committee that the hours of operation for Metrolink services to the Airport was constantly being reviewed. She informed Members that there were already a lot of examples of local residents who had progressed their careers through Manchester Airport and agreed that it was important to consider how this was being communicated to local residents, so that they could see the benefit that the Airport brought to their area.

The Strategic Director (Growth and Development) reported that transport infrastructure, and investment in this infrastructure, were fundamental to Manchester's growth, although there were limits on the ability of partners, including the Airport, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), to affect change. She advised that bus franchising provided an opportunity to influence the transport network and that, following the decision about HS2, the Council and its partners would continue to make the case for investment in the transport infrastructure that was needed for Manchester and the north.

### **Decisions:**

1. To request that the report by Arup be circulated to Committee Members.
2. To request that the Airport's response to the Rail Minister on what it wants to see delivered from the funding package for the northern transport network be circulated to Committee Members, once it is available.
3. To receive a further report on the Airport in the next municipal year.

### **ERSC/23/54 Rail Update**

The Committee received a report of the Director of City Centre Growth and Infrastructure which provided an update on the current position with a number of rail schemes, including high speed and conventional rail, and the resulting impact on the city.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and Network North;
- Northern Hub update;
- Manchester & North West Transformation Programme (MNTP) and Manchester Recovery Task Force (MRTF);
- The Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU);
- Manchester & Salford Central Stations Prospectus;
- Current train service issues and opportunities;

- GM Rail Board update; and
- Priorities for Manchester.

Key points and queries that arose from the Committee's discussions included:

- To express concern at the impact of the decision on HS2 on Manchester, Greater Manchester and the north;
- How much money had been spent working on HS2 over the past 10 years;
- How 'tap-in tap-out' pricing would work, given the complexity of the ticketing options;
- The management of land owned by Network Rail and engagement with the Council and Ward Councillors on this; and
- Concern that, after having its contract renewed, Avanti West Coast had cut its services.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of City Centre Growth and Infrastructure reported that the Government was not required to publish the Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the decision on HS2. She informed the Committee that the Council had spent around £3 million since 2012 on work relating to HS2.

Simon Elliot from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) advised Members that an integrated public transport system, including integrated ticketing, was key to the roll-out of the Bee Network. He acknowledged the challenges of introducing a 'tap-in tap-out' contactless system due to the complexity of rail ticket pricing, informing Members of a pilot on the train route from Glossop and Stalybridge into Manchester by 2025, prior to a multi-modal roll-out across the region. He reported that TfGM shared Members' disappointment regarding the reduction in Avanti West Coast services in December, advising that these were due to planning issues, historical terms and conditions and a backlog in driver training and emphasising the importance of ensuring the reliability of the reduced service. He reported that Andy Burnham, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, had written, through the Rail North Committee, to Avanti stating that the reduced service was not acceptable and seeking assurances that there would not be further reductions in the New Year. He informed the Committee that the Rail North Committee was the body responsible for holding rail companies in the north to account and that the Managing Director of Avanti, Andrew Mellors, had attended a meeting of the Committee and would be providing them with Avanti's full recovery plan for the New Year.

Christopher Coleman from Network Rail advised Members that, if they informed him of the details of the issues relating to Network Rail land, he would work with colleagues to address these concerns. The Executive Member for Environment and Transport offered to work with Network Rail on how Ward Councillors could engage with Network Rail on issues relating to their land, ensuring that they received a consistently good response.

The Chair emphasised the importance of north-south connectivity, as well as east-west connectivity, and expressed concern that the Government did not appear to have a plan for north-south rail beyond using the current West Coast Main Line. He also expressed disappointment at the cancellation of Work Package C's Transport

and Works Act Order (TWAO), relating to improvements at Oxford Road and Piccadilly Stations, and questioned why this decision had been taken.

David Hoggarth from Transport for the North (TfN) reported that, along with other organisations, TfN was trying to get more details on plans in relation to Northern Powerhouse Rail and following the decision on HS2. He highlighted a report which TfN was submitting to its Board meeting the following week, which recommended safeguarding the routes until a clear alternative was put forward and reconfirming its position in relation to the Strategic Transport Plan for the North, publishing this in the next few months. He reported that TfN would be working with all parties, including the Department for Transport as a potential funder, on opportunities for developing and financing the north-south link. He reported that the industry was pushing Network Rail to work to identify a solution to the congestion issues around the Manchester Piccadilly area through to Stockport.

Christopher Coleman from Network Rail reported that the Manchester Recovery Task Force (MRTF) had been formed in 2020 with one of its objectives being to address the capacity issues on the Castlefield Corridor. He advised that it had identified that the issues related to the wider network and had put in place a number of actions to address this, which included a small reduction in the number of services using the Castlefield Corridor in the December 2022 timetable to improve reliability and punctuality. He reported that a second piece of work for the Task Force was a Performance and Capacity Strategy to ensure that the required infrastructure was in place before the timetable was increased and that £72 million of Government funding had been awarded to improve connectivity, reliability and performance in north Manchester. He reported that there was an emerging capacity challenge between Stockport and Manchester Piccadilly and that Network Rail was taking a strategic view of this, testing a number of scenarios to identify improvements that might need to be made and he outlined some of the options being considered. He reported that proposals for Platforms 15 and 16 at Piccadilly Station were being included in this strategic review. He informed Members that the original proposal for additional platforms at Manchester Oxford Road Station would have taken the building work significantly outside the boundary of Network Rail's land and it was determined that it was not a viable option and he advised that an alternative design was being worked on, with partner organisations, which would also address other issues, including accessibility. The Chair expressed concern that there was no real strategy at a national level for delivering these improvements and reported that the wider capacity issues had been due to be addressed through the Northern Hub and other projects.

In response to comments from the Chair, Christopher Coleman from Network Rail reported that decisions on Oxford Road Station were not being taken in isolation and that Network Rail was responsible for preparing strategic advice for the future of the network, which was continually reviewed and updated, including in light of the decision on HS2. In response to a question from the Chair, he reported that discussions were taking place on the right way to communicate and engage with the Council and informed Members that the Council had been offered the opportunity to work with the Manchester & North West Transformation Programme (MNTP) on matters affecting Manchester.

The Chair requested a briefing for City Centre Councillors on the Manchester and Salford Central Stations Prospectus, including the local impact on communities and the Council's response. Christopher Coleman from Network Rail explained the purpose of the Prospectus and how it was being developed with stakeholders. He reported that it would be ready in the New Year and could be shared with Members. The Director of City Centre Growth and Infrastructure reported that she and Christopher Coleman would provide a briefing for the local Ward Councillors in the New Year.

### **Decisions:**

1. To receive a report on the Strategic Rail Plan at an appropriate time.
2. To note that a briefing on the Manchester and Salford Central Stations Prospectus will be arranged for local Ward Councillors in the New Year.

[Councillor Taylor declared a disclosable pecuniary interest as her client, First Group, was referred to in the report and she left the room for this item.]

[Councillor Johns declared a personal interest due to writing and speaking on the subject of rail.]

### **ERSC/23/55 Information on the economic impacts of Social Value**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Inclusive Economy which provided an update on social value and provided examples of the social value opportunities generated as a direct result of Manchester City Council's procurement policy.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Background information;
- Achievements so far and economic impacts, including Social Value delivered by suppliers to the Council through different contracts; and
- Current focus and next steps.

Paul Galloway from Morgan Sindall, the construction company which built Gorton Hub, outlined the Social Value activities his organisation had undertaken, including job creation, education activities, work with local unemployed people, community initiatives and work to reduce waste and carbon emissions.

Katie Mowat from Biffa delivered a presentation about Biffa's Social Value activities, including school engagement and community events, as well as colleague engagement and plans and priorities for 2024.

Key points and queries that arose from the Committee's discussions included:

- To recognise the importance of Social Value and to thank the companies for fully engaging with it;
- How Councillors could support the effective use of Social Value in their wards;

- Monitoring to ensure companies met the Social Value elements of their contract;
- Whether homeless families could be added as one of the targeted priority groups;
- The variations in how well companies delivered Social Value activities and using learning to improve the use of Social Value and capturing and sharing good practice; and
- Was data available on the extent to which the targeted priority groups were being reached.

The Deputy Executive Member for Finance and Resources informed the Committee that there was support from Ward Councillors on Social Value but that this involvement could be improved and she would give further consideration to how local Members could be better communicated with and engaged in this work, advising that Ward Councillors understood local needs. She informed Members about work taking place to gather case studies on Social Value and then communicate this work to external audiences and also to Members, so that they could see examples of best practice and use this as inspiration for identifying Social Value activities for their ward. She informed Members that a Social Value Co-ordinator had recently been recruited who would work across all Directorates and have an overview of work taking place across the Council.

In response to a Member's question about ensuring that the Social Value opportunities relating to Wythenshawe Civic Centre were maximised, the Director of Inclusive Growth reported that Social Value was a built-in consideration in the procurement process for the development. She outlined some of the investment into the area and reported that the approach to Social Value in Wythenshawe would be similar to, and take learning from, the approach in north Manchester. She informed Members that Social Value was built into contracts and monitoring this was part of the contract management arrangements. She reported that the Social Value Policy had been refreshed by Executive in March 2021, including amending the priority groups. She reported that some young people who had experienced homelessness would be covered under the other priority groups and that some companies had undertaken Social Value work relating to homelessness. The Executive Member for Finance and Resources offered to discuss reviewing the targeted priority groups with the Member who had raised this issue.

The Strategic Lead (Commissioning) reported that, for the Town Hall Project, there were financial consequences for companies if they did not deliver on the Social Value element of their contract; however, the first step if the Social Value element of a contract was not being delivered was normally to discuss this with the company concerned.

The Head of Integrated Commissioning and Procurement reported that there had been significant work in recent years to improve the Council's contract management and that the new system which would be in place soon would provide better data to support this work.

In response to a question on the Real Living Wage, the Strategic Lead (Commissioning) reported that this was a standard question on all procurements, as



well as whether the organisation was a member of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter, or could demonstrate that it met the different aspects of the Charter. He reported that there were challenges with gathering data on the extent to which targeted priority groups were being reached by Social Value activities but that working with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations could help with this. In response to a Member's question on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), he explained that, for larger-scale procurement, the Council was legally not allowed to differentiate between bidders, although they could support smaller organisations through training on how to bid for public sector contracts; however, smaller value procurements could be reserved for particular sectors, such as SMEs or VCSE organisations.

**Decision:**

To recommend that, when the Social Value Framework is next reviewed, children and families who have experienced homelessness be added as a priority group.

**ERSC/23/56 Evaluation of the Moss Side, Moston and Old Moat Selective Licensing Areas**

**ERSC/23/57 Proposal for the Next Phase of Selective Licensing**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Development and the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which provided the outcomes of the evaluation of the Moss Side, Moston and Old Moat Selective Licensing pilot areas.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Implementation of the Scheme;
- Housing Compliance and Enforcement;
- Housing-related requests;
- Waste management and fly tipping;
- Victim-based crime, antisocial behaviour and domestic noise incidents;
- Deprivation and the housing market impact;
- Feedback from Neighbourhoods Teams and case studies;
- Communication and engagement; and
- Lessons learned and issues to consider.

The Committee also received a report of the Strategic Director (Growth and Development) and the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which identified nine potential areas across six wards that were experiencing issues which met the criteria to justify a Selective Licensing designation in the area. Officers were seeking approval to undertake a consultation exercise to establish whether the declaration of a Selective Licensing scheme was required within the identified areas.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Process for identifying areas which would benefit from Selective Licensing;
- Neighbourhood and Enforcement Teams engagement;
- Local Member engagement;

- Proposed Phase 4 Selective Licensing Areas – Criteria; and
- Introducing Phase 4 of Selective Licensing - Consultation Plan.

Key points and queries that arose from the Committee's discussions included:

- Noting that the evaluation of the Moss Side, Moston and Old Moat Selective Licensing areas had found that excess cold was the most common serious issue and discussing the reasons for this;
- To welcome the level of data that had been gathered and to ask whether qualitative data from tenants had been gathered; and
- How decisions were made on the final list for the next phase from the original longlist.

In response to a Member's question, the Executive Member for Housing and Development reported that at present the Council could have 20% of the city's Private Rented Sector (PRS) licensed and that this sector represented approximately 40% of housing stock in the city. He informed Members that, as part of the Devolution Trailblazer deals, some of these housing decisions would be devolved from the Secretary of State to the Mayor of Greater Manchester and that discussions were taking place with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) about future implications.

The Compliance and Enforcement Specialist reported that the energy crisis and cost-of-living crisis had contributed to the increase in excess cold issues. She reported that qualitative feedback from residents had been obtained via residents' groups and residents' forums. In response to a further question about the feedback received, she reported that this had been mixed. She advised that some residents understood what Selective Licensing was, engaged with it and found it a positive experience; however, she reported that there was a need to manage expectations of some residents and also to raise awareness of the scheme, particularly as there was a turnover of residents during the time of the scheme. She informed Members that the Council now had an Engagement Officer to work with residents' group and landlords and to promote the schemes.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development reported that lessons learnt about resident engagement would be taken forward. In response to a Member's question, he stated that the consultation exercise regarding the introduction of Selective Licensing in an area made everyone in the area aware of it and that local knowledge was used to identify properties which should be licensed but were not.

The Housing Strategy Project Manager reported that areas had been ranked against the Selective Licensing criteria to arrive at a manageable list of areas which were the ones which would most benefit from Selective Licensing in the next phase. He advised that Neighbourhood Teams had also been engaged with as part of the decision-making and consideration given to whether other ways of addressing issues had already been pursued.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development reported that the proportion of PRS housing in an area was another factor taken into account, noting that this, and other factors, could change over time and that areas which had not been selected

this time would be considered again in future. He recognised a Member's comments about tackling issues relating to flats above shops, through both Selective Licensing and other interventions.

**Decisions:**

1. To note the findings of the evaluation of the Moss Side, Moston and Old Moat Selective Licensing Areas.
2. To commend the nine areas across six wards detailed in Maps 1 to 9 (Appendix 1) to the Executive as the Phase 4 Selective Licensing areas.
3. To commend the consultation plan outlined in Section 7 of this report to the Executive.

[Councillor Richards declared a personal and prejudicial interest as she had been involved in the decision-making on Selective Licensing during her time as an Executive Member and she left the room for this item.]

**ERSC/23/58 Overview Report**

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

**Decision:**

That the Committee note the report and agree the work programme.

# **Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 9 January 2024**

### **Present:**

Councillor Johns – in the Chair  
Councillors Benham, Hussain, Iqbal, Northwood, Richards, I Robinson, Shilton  
Godwin and Taylor

### **Also present:**

Councillor Rawlins, Executive Member for Environment and Transport  
Councillor Reid, Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

### **ERSC/24/01 Minutes**

#### **Decision**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023 be approved as a correct record.

### **ERSC/24/02 Road Safety**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which set out the Council's approach to Road Safety.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Examples of previous Road Safety Projects;
- City Wide Speed Limit Reductions;
- School Streets Schemes;
- Controlled Pedestrian Crossings;
- Cycle Training (Schools);
- Vision Zero;
- School Crossings and Park Entrances Audit;
- Enforcement of Moving Traffic Offences;
- Disabled access improvements;
- Enforcement activities undertaken around schools including GMP (Greater Manchester Police);
- Road Safety Strategy document;
- Speed Cameras / Red Light Cameras;
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan;
- Road Safety Week; and
- Road Safety Tool Kits for schools.

The Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee addressed the Committee in relation to schools and active travel. She reported that, due to increases in pupil numbers, children were having to travel further to school, crossing main roads. She reported that driving had got worse since the pandemic and expressed concern about issues on the main arterial routes into the city and cuts to

traffic policing. She referred to previous national campaigns to make drivers aware of the dangers of speeding.

The Head of Network Management acknowledged the points raised. He reported that, while investment was needed to make improvements on the roads network to improve safety, policing was also needed and the Council and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) were working with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) in relation to enforcement and greater visibility, which would act as a deterrent. He highlighted the importance of education, training and enforcement. He recognised that road safety campaigns and messaging had not been as prominent in recent years as they had been previously and advised that this was something that the Council would pursue, including lobbying the Department for Transport regarding a national campaign. He informed Members about the role of car manufacturers and the use of technology such as black boxes to reduce accidents. He informed Members that the Council was developing a Road Safety Strategy to identify improvements that the Council could make and monitor progress against targets.

The Director of Highways reported that an assessment of all school and park entrances had been carried out in the previous six months and that, on the basis of this, and subject to funding, improvement work would be planned to improve safety. He highlighted the additional powers that the Council had been granted to enforce moving traffic offences (MTOs) which would be important for tackling some of the poor driving behaviour referred to. He reported that speed camera enforcement would be part of the Road Safety Programme which was being rolled out.

The Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee expressed concern about drug-driving and advised that more speed cameras were needed on main arterial roads. She reported that Manchester did not currently have its fair share of school buses, compared to other Greater Manchester authorities, and informed the Committee about work she was involved in to address this.

Key points and queries that arose from the Committee's discussions included:

- The importance of this issue and its connection to other key priorities such as being an Age Friendly City and a Child Friendly City and that this should be more strongly reflected in the report;
- Concern that the percentage of collisions which resulted in death or serious injury had increased since 2011;
- That in order to encourage parents to allow their children to travel to school independently there needed to be a focus on the whole journey from home to school, not just road safety in the immediate vicinity of the school;
- The importance of the perception of safety;
- Behaviour change and enforcement near schools, including in relation to dangerous and obstructive parking;
- Questioning whether "accidents" was an appropriate term to use when collisions were often caused by the behaviour of the driver;
- The use of evidence from citizens, such as cyclists' cameras;
- Sites selected for the enforcement of MTOs;
- Improvements for pedestrians, including disabled people and parents with prams;

- To request that future reports include more geographical context, for example hotspots and challenges in particular areas;
- To request that the Road Safety Strategy be considered by the Committee once it was available;
- Managing road safety in relation to temporary building works, when footpaths for closed;
- Concern that the data did not fully reflect what was happening in some parts of the city; and
- Whether, as part of the GM Camera Partnership, more innovative options could be considered, for example, portable cameras and cameras which showed a driver's speed on a screen.

The Director of Highways advised that, as school entrances were a very busy area at peak times, this had been identified as a particular risk but he recognised Members' points about the whole journey to school. He referenced work through schools to educate parents about road safety around drop-off and pick-up times and the role of enforcement. He reported that the Council would consider what more could be done in relation to enforcement arounds schools as part of the Road Safety Strategy, while advising that consideration would need to be given to whether this would displace the problem onto neighbouring streets. The Head of Network Management reported that a multi-faceted approach was needed, including ongoing work with schools, physical changes to the environment around schools and School Streets schemes.

The Director of Highways reported that police forces were encouraging the public to submit dashcam footage to support the prosecution of offences and that the Council would support GMP in obtaining footage from the public. In response to a Member's question, he stated that he did not think that this type of information was being used as evidence in relation to civil offences but that he would check this with the relevant team and look into whether this could be changed.

The Head of Network Management reported that he would circulate a website link to Members through which footage could be submitted and that they could share this link with residents. In response to a Member's question, he reported that an evaluation had taken place of the 20 miles per hour speed limits now in place on most residential streets, to ascertain how effective this had been in reducing collisions and their severity; however, he recognised that enforcement of the 20 miles per hour zones was an issue. He provided an update on the sites selected for the enforcement of MTOs and offered to share initial data from the first site, on Stockport Road, where enforcement was already taking place. He outlined how the initial seven sites had been selected, using information from the public, Ward Councillors and GMP, as well as camera analysis surveys. He advised that criteria was being developed for the selection of further sites and that Members would be invited to submit for consideration any further sites which they believed should be included. He reported that there were many issues affecting the accessibility of pavements for disabled people, including pavement condition, drop crossings and street furniture, commenting that trials were currently taking place in the city centre to remove or re-position street furniture to make a clearer route for pedestrians. He reported that the Council was continuing to lobby the Government on funding for highways maintenance. He reported that the Council had a lot of data on accident analysis and he could provide ward-based data for any Members who were

interested. He informed Members that higher-level data was also available through the TfGM website. He advised that, as part of the Road Safety Strategy, detailed monitoring and reporting would be put in place. He acknowledged a Member's point about the importance of benchmarking with comparator cities. He assured Members that road safety and traffic management were fully considered in relation to temporary building works and outlined the process for this.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport reported that she and officers would review the terminology used, including in relation to "accidents" or "collisions". She advised that it was important for the Council to use the levers available to it, for example, in relation to Social Value, to educate people on road safety and that this was already being done to improve signage around schools. She reported that education on Road Safety was key and that the work that took place in Road Safety Week in November should be repeated throughout the year, advising that, while more resources were needed, she would be working with officers, Members, schools and other partners to improve education on this important issue. She stated that she and officers would revisit the evaluation of the reduction in speed limits to 20 miles per hour on most residential roads in order to have the evidence base to roll this work out further. She reported that she would circulate information to Members on undertaking more community speed watch trials.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Highways clarified that the Network Management Duty on the expeditious movement of traffic included pedestrians and cyclists. In response to a question about planning applications and Section 106 funds, he confirmed that this was routinely considered as part of the planning process. He reported that, as part of the Road Safety Strategy, additional sources of data would be sought, for example, on incidents which had resulted in damage to street furniture but had not required police involvement. In response to a question about utility companies and the positioning of street furniture such as broadband cabinets, he reported that his service worked to try to ensure that they were put in the most suitable locations but that the utility companies had statutory rights in relation to this which restricted what the Council could do. He confirmed that the Council would look into different options for speed cameras and portable Variable Message Signs. He acknowledged a Member's point about engineering the environment to improve safety, using traffic calming measures.

#### **Decisions:**

1. To note the Road Safety work being planned.
2. To request that the Committee scrutinise the Road Safety Strategy at a future meeting and that this be updated to reflect the points raised in the meeting, in particular the centrality of Road Safety to wider Council priorities, such as being a liveable, Age Friendly and Child Friendly City.
3. To request that the Director of Highways check with the relevant team whether dashcam footage could be used for civil offences in future.
4. To request that the Head of Network Management circulate the website link through which footage from members of the public can be submitted.

5. To note that the Executive Member for Environment and Transport will circulate information to Members on undertaking more community speed watch trials.

### **ERSC/24/03 Highways Condition of the City Annual Report 2022/23**

The Committee received a report of the Head of Network Management which highlighted the performance, key outcomes and successes achieved in 2022/23 along with some of the challenges going forward.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Investment in the city;
- Social Value;
- Street works;
- Winter services;
- Major projects;
- Road safety and pedestrian crossings;
- Network congestion;
- Service performance and delivery;
- Public satisfaction;
- Key highway assets;
- Cycleways;
- Drainage, including Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS);
- Bridges and structures; and
- Street lighting.

Key points and queries that arose from the Committee's discussions included:

- Had an assessment taken place into whether the investment in highways was good value for money;
- Succession planning and addressing staffing gaps;
- Communication with residents on the work of the Highways Service as well as communication with residents who had reported problems and obtaining feedback from residents;
- How would the condition of footpaths be improved, given the budget constraints;
- Service performance targets and how Manchester compared to other Core Cities;
- The quality and durability of thermal repairs;
- Concerns about roads and pavements which were being dug up by broadband companies and reinstatement work being carried out in a timely manner and to a good standard;
- Loose flagstones;
- Noting that some information had been excluded from the report to keep it at a manageable size, suggesting that in future additional information could be included as an appendix;



- That it was important to think about culture change, rather than behaviour change of individuals;
- How non-responses were considered in consultations, given that those who felt most strongly on either side were the only ones likely to respond and concern that this could result in some schemes not going ahead on the basis of a vocal minority;
- Learning from the Chorlton Cycleway consultation and other large projects; and
- How success was defined in reports, requesting that in future it should be clear whether this referred to outputs or intended outcomes.

The Director of Highways reported that a workforce plan was being developed for the Highways Service in addition to a proposed restructure to provide better succession planning; however, he advised that there was a national shortage of civil engineers and that local authorities across the country were struggling to recruit to some technical posts. He informed Members about plans to build a graduate and apprenticeship programme and create career pathways to retain staff. In response to a Member's comments about the quality of street works carried out by broadband companies, he advised that part of the challenge was recruiting to roles to carry out inspections.

The Head of Network Management drew Members' attention to the information in the report on the Annual National Highways and Transport (NHT) Survey, stating that the data, including public satisfaction, was benchmarked against other Greater Manchester authorities and Core Cities. He stated that value for money was assessed by central Government and that Manchester's Highways Service performed well on this. He reported that information on value for money was originally going to have been included in the report but was excluded due to the large amount of information already in the report. He informed Members about the role of preventative maintenance of roads, which provided value for money by extending its life. He informed Members that Manchester did more resident engagement and consultation on highways than most local authorities, although he acknowledged that still more could be done, and he offered to provide Members with further information on this work. He recognised Members' concerns about footpath condition and the need for more funding. He advised the Committee that the Council had worked hard to identify funding to protect and improve the condition of the city's highways, which included more funding for footway maintenance, however, more funding was needed from central Government. In response to a Member's question, he offered to check with colleagues on targets for public behaviour change. He reported that his service undertook a lot of evaluation of the performance of different types of repairs and that thermal repairs generally performed well. He informed Members that his service worked with the Communications Team to inform residents about the work they were doing, including Highways Takeover Days or Weeks. He reported that, when the new CRM system was introduced, Highways would be one of the first services to use it, advising that this would provide improved customer updates. In response to a Member's comments, he stated that work by broadband companies involving digging up roads and pavements had been causing a lot of issues for his team. He stated that there had been a lot of poor-quality reinstatements by the broadband contractors, a lot of which would need to be redone. He reported that utility companies had a statutory right to dig up the roads and had six months to put in

place a permanent repair. He stated that Highways Inspectors carried out checks around the city but that Members could contact him directly if they had concerns that a permanent repair had not been carried out within this timeframe. He informed Members about challenges with pothole repairs, particularly on failed roads, where the repair might only last a few months, and advised that in these cases it was important for the road to be fully resurfaced.

In response to a Member's question about when the new CRM system would be in place for the Highways Service, the Director of Highways stated that he would check with ICT colleagues and respond to the Member.

The Director of Highways confirmed that work would take place to identify lessons that could be learnt from the Chorlton Cycleway consultation, including on engagement with businesses, and that, on the basis of lessons learnt from a range of major projects, the Consultation and Engagement Guide would be reviewed, including consideration of how non-responses were interpreted.

In response to a Member's questions, the Head of Network Management reported that his service had a Development Control Team which worked closely with Planning and that his service was a statutory consultee on planning applications, identifying improvements that could be made to the road network through planning conditions or Section 106 funding, advising that the latter now had to be clearly linked to the impact of the development. He reported that flagstones were now being laid on concrete or mortar rather than sand beds to address the problem of loose flagstones. In response to a question from the Chair about gullies, he reported that the Council had invested significantly in highways drainage, although there was more work to be done. He outlined how gullies were cleaned and tested and, if necessary, further investigations were carried out to identify the cause of the problem and the best solution. In response to a question from the Chair, he outlined how his service worked with TfGM to better understand road congestion and good network management and advised that further information could be provided in a future report.

### **Decisions:**

1. To request that the information on value for money that had been excluded from the report be circulated to Committee Members.
2. To receive a report at a future meeting on lessons learnt from major projects.

### **ERSC/24/04 Pavement Parking**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which provided an overview of issues relating to pavement parking.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Managing pavement parking, including physical prevention, accommodation and enforcement;

- Consequential effects of preventing pavement parking; and
- Pavement parking in Manchester.

Key points and queries that arose from the Committee's discussions included:

- The problems that pavement parking caused in Members' wards for pedestrians, particularly wheelchair users and those with pushchairs, and local residents and that the extent of the problem was not captured in the report;
- That wards neighbouring the city centre were particularly badly affected due to commuters parking on their streets;
- Concern about people driving on the pavement and that enforcement action should be taken;
- Damage to pavements from vehicles, particularly Heavy Goods Vehicles;
- To support action to address pavement parking, while recognising the challenges involved in this;
- Concern that there was insufficient guidance from the Government on addressing this;
- Questions about trials schemes and the need to communicate the changes to drivers;
- That some drivers were not deterred by fines because it was not a lot of money to them;
- To request a further report following a response from the Government or when data was available from the trial schemes; and
- Noting that in some areas banning pavement parking would make a road effectively a one-lane road, due to the width of the roads; and
- That the language in the report should demonstrate that other road users were being prioritised over car users.

In response to Members' questions about the trial project to prevent pavement parking, the Executive Member for Environment and Transport reported that there was no blueprint for this as yet due to the complexities involved. She reported that they were looking across the whole city for trial areas, that consideration needed to be given to where the cars would go if they were not parked on the pavement and that part of the work was about behaviour change and reducing the number of cars in the city. She advised that it was important not to just displace the problem into different areas. In response to a Member's comments about Operation Park Safe in Sheffield, she reported that GMP were looking to other areas for good practice which could be adopted in Manchester. She informed Members that she was also engaging with local MPs to make progress on this issue.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Highways reported that GMP was looking into using photographic evidence provided by members of the public to support enforcement but that clarification was needed on the definition of obstruction in relation to pavement parking offences. He agreed with a point from the Chair about a minimum width of clear footpath being a useful measure, stating that this would be useful for defining obstruction and for prioritising areas for intervention. In response to a further question, he confirmed that grass verges were included under the pavement parking powers in place in London. He informed Members that, if

similar powers were extended to Manchester, consultation and engagement with drivers and residents would take place before it was introduced. In response to a question from the Chair, he stated that, if a vehicle caused damage, for example, to a bollard, the Council would try to recover the costs from the driver but that cumulative damage to pavements due to vehicles driving over them was difficult to attribute to an individual driver. He advised that there would be a challenge in balancing the interests of pedestrians against the loss of on-street parking for residents.

The Chair requested that a representative from GMP be invited to attend next time this item was considered.

### **Decisions:**

1. To note:
  - The legislative position with regard to managing and enforcing parking on the pavement, with particular reference to the current issues relating to the definition of “obstruction” in law;
  - The challenges with respect to the consequences of displaced parking when implementing measures to prevent or enforce against pavement parking;
  - The ongoing work to identify suitable locations for the introduction of a trial project in Manchester to prevent pavement parking, in order to evaluate the consequential impacts of displaced parking and;
  - That the Executive Member for Transport and Environment will write to the Secretary of State for Transport to request clarity on the offence of “obstruction” in these circumstances, and to seek confirmation of a timeframe for the devolution of civil enforcement powers for obstruction offences/contraventions and the powers to introduce a ban on pavement parking to Local Authorities outside London
2. To request a further report at an appropriate time, following a response from the Government or when data is available from the trials, and to invite a representative from GMP to attend this meeting.

### **ERSC/24/05 Overview Report**

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee’s remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee’s work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

The Chair informed Members that the report on the Cultural Strategy had been deferred to the next municipal year.

### **Decision:**

That the Committee note the report and agree the work programme.

## **Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 5 December 2023**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Hitchen (Chair) – in the Chair

Councillors Azra Ali, Doswell, Good, Ogunbambo, Rawson, Sheikh and Wills

#### **Also present:**

Councillor Rahman, Statutory Deputy Leader

Councillor Midgley, Deputy Leader

Councillor T Robinson, Executive Member (Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care)

#### **CESC/23/51            Minutes**

**Decision:** That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 7 November 2023, be approved as a correct record.

#### **CESC/23/52            Age Friendly Manchester Refreshed Strategy 2023-2028 Draft Delivery Plan**

The committee considered a report of the Director of Public Health and the Age Friendly Manchester Programme Lead which outlined Manchester's new age friendly strategy *Manchester: a city for life 2023–2028* and associated draft delivery plan, which built on previous progress and provided a vision for Manchester over the next five years. This included a series of immediate and preventative responses to address the ongoing impact of the pandemic and the ensuing cost-of-living crisis on the over 50s.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Providing an introduction to the new ageing strategy;
- The development of the new strategy;
- Governance arrangements for the Age Friendly Programme
- A summary of the strategy, including its themes; and
- The draft delivery plan, which set out the activities and collaborative work to be delivered across the city by the Council, its partners and with local communities.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussion included:

- Welcoming the draft delivery plan and requesting that the committee receives progress updates every 6 months;
- How the Council working with social housing providers to encourage and ensure adaptations are made to existing properties to enable residents to age in their homes;

- If the Age Friendly Manchester Older People's Board included a representative from the LGBTQIA+ community;
- Highlighting that the experience of turning 50 years old is different for everybody;
- How the city's neighbourhoods can be made Age Friendly;
- How many attended Assembly meetings and how geographically representative this was;
- The rationale behind choosing Cheetham Hill, Crumpsall and Gorton to test the Age Friendly Neighbourhood Manchester model;
- Expressing ongoing concerns about undertaking the Age Friendly Neighbourhood Manchester model pilot in areas with existing infrastructure, and querying the fairness of this;
- Recognising the need for greater funding for VCSE organisations that support older people;
- Why only the development of the North Manchester Healthy Neighbourhood was mentioned under theme 2;
- What specific analysis had been undertaken into the health and care needs of different demographics;
- Whether there was a helpline for residents to contact to discuss housing adaptations;
- What consideration had been given to older people seeking undergraduate and postgraduate education opportunities; and
- Recognising that residents in North Manchester were likely to suffer ill-health for longer than those in South Manchester.

The Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care stated that the Age Friendly Manchester Strategy was launched in the previous week and endorsed by Full Council at its meeting in November. He explained that the delivery plan for the strategy aimed to ensure that older people in Manchester felt heard and could see changes enacted as a result of using their voice and that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis were considered throughout the strategy and delivery plan. He confirmed that the delivery plan would be launched in January following consideration by the Older People's Board.

The Director of Public Health stated that there was a strong corporate ownership of the strategy across the Council with the Executive Director of Adult Social Services chairing the Age Friendly Manchester Executive, which included membership from across all Council directorates. He also explained that consultation with community groups would continue throughout December and any recommendations from the committee would be incorporated into the final delivery plan.

In response to members' queries, the Programme Lead – Age Friendly Manchester explained that the strategy aimed to identify economic inequalities as well as other characteristics and intersectionality. He noted that the health of a 50-year-old Bangladeshi person in Manchester was equivalent to that of an 80-year-old white woman and the wider Making Manchester Fairer programme sought to address this.

It was also explained that work had been undertaken previously with the LGBT Foundation to support the Pride in Ageing initiative, which involved the Council providing funding to identify the experience of over-50s in the LGBTQ+ community and how this differed to younger LGBTQ+ people. The Programme Lead – Age Friendly Manchester advised that this initiative led to the establishment of a Greater Manchester advisory group of older LGBTQ+ people who provided detail on their lived experience and a Manchester resident had been recruited from this advisory group to sit on the Older People’s Board. This was also emulated through the Carer’s Network and the BAME Network to ensure representation from a range of communities.

It was noted that more work was needed with regards to housing and the Age Friendly Manchester Executive was yet to meet to discuss this and to provide a strategic direction. The Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social advised that a review into this had been completed between his portfolio and the Housing and Development portfolio to identify how this work would be monitored going forwards. This was governed by the Adult Social Care service and he stated the ambition to ensure that housing providers had the suitable level of support to enable implementation and cited the Manchester Equipment and Adaptations Partnership as a good example of this.

In response to a request for 6-month progress updates, the Director of Public Health confirmed that this could be provided.

The Programme Lead – Age Friendly Manchester explained that a pilot would be undertaken in Cheetham Hill, Crumpsall and Gorton and Abbey Hey but the programme aimed to develop a neighbourhood model which would include the physical, social, and cultural features of an Age Friendly neighbourhood. It was important to understand local older populations as part of this work. The committee was informed that these areas were selected for the pilot because of work that had been undertaken in Gorton prior to the Covid-19 pandemic because of the extra care scheme, the neighbourhood hub, and plans for regeneration of the district centre. The Programme Lead – Age Friendly Manchester specifically noted opportunities around changing population, levels of deprivation and mixed housing use and opportunities to influence at a local and strategic level. Funding had also been received across GM to develop an Ageing in Place partnership model, who provided extra resources for work in Gorton and Abbey Hey. The committee was further advised that there was an aim to undertake this work somewhere within North Manchester with a mixed demographic and that the development of the hospital site and residential areas provided a clear opportunity for this. The committee noted this response but continued to express concern over the practicality of this scheme and that this did not take into consideration areas without existing infrastructure.

It was noted that the pilot areas faced particular challenges including poverty and poor health irrespective of existing infrastructure and the Programme Lead – Age Friendly Manchester explained that the pilot would help to identify ways in which local

strategic partnerships, such as ward coordination, elected members and voluntary organisations, could be utilised to understand older people and how services could be delivered in an Age Friendly way across the city. The Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care reiterated that the pilot areas were strong starting points for assessing and developing the model.

In response to queries about the Assembly, the committee was informed that this consisted of 90 members who met once per quarter. There was a strong ethnic diversity on the Assembly but a need for more members aged between 50 and 70 years old and from North Manchester was acknowledged.

The Director of Public Health recognised the budget constraints facing VCSE organisations and stated that the Council was trying to provide resources where additional capacity was required through Our Manchester Funds.

In response to a question regarding the specific analysis undertaken into the health and care needs of different demographics, the committee was informed of the Better Outcomes, Better Lives programme which aimed to meet the different needs of communities in Manchester. The Director of Public Health acknowledged the need for a responsive health and social care service and the inequalities between communities and that it was important not to make generalisations about need, particularly following the Covid-19 pandemic. He also informed members of Sounding Boards with Community Health Equity Manchester, which enabled collaborative working with partners across the sector.

The Programme Lead – Age Friendly Manchester noted the specific work being undertaken in North Manchester and explained that the proposed International Centre for Action on Healthy Ageing would be a national site but located in North Manchester. He reiterated that the Council's intention was to strategically influence developments like this to ensure the promotion of the Age Friendly Manchester principles and objectives. The Director of Public Health also stated that the proposed International Centre for Action on Healthy Ageing would benefit the whole city.

The Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care stated that work around North Manchester General Hospital should not be viewed in isolation as this would be a model for work across the city.

With regards to education opportunities for over 50s, it was acknowledged that these were typically around improving an individual's skillset, rather than university degrees, but this could be looked into further with the Council's Work and Skills team.

Officers also recognised the impact of geography and locality on health inequalities and stated that the long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on mental health was still largely unknown, with poor health still felt more widely in certain areas of the city. It was stated that further investigation into this would be undertaken through the medium-term plan for the strategy.



The Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care reiterated how the strategy encompassed much of the Council's work and service areas and stated that the delivery plan was ambitious and in-depth. He commended the work of the officers involved and paid special tribute to the Programme Lead - Age Friendly Manchester who would be retiring in early 2024.

In closing the item, the Chair also placed on record her thanks to officers for their work on the strategy and delivery plan.

**Decision:**

That

1. the report be noted;
2. the committee requests a progress update on the work of the Age Friendly Manchester Strategy Delivery Plan in 6 months, to include an update on recruitment to the Assembly; plans for transport improvements; and an update on communications;
3. the committee requests to undertake an annual 'deep-dive' into the Age Friendly Manchester Strategy and Delivery Plan.

**CESC/23/53            Our Manchester Funds Programme Overview**

The committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided an overview of the current Our Manchester Funds programme, activities and priorities and brought together new information and information previously considered by the committee about individual aspects of the programme.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background to the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector and the Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (OMVCS) fund;
- The main priorities of the programme;
- The Supporting Communities Fund;
- The VCFSE Infrastructure Support Contract;
- Other targeted support, including the Cost of Living Fund;
- The Household Support Fund;
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic VCSFE Organisations Support Fund;
- Covid Recovery Fund;
- Other partnerships and forums;
- The OMVCS Programme Board and governance arrangements; and
- How the Council's wider priorities, such as Zero Carbon and the Real Living Wage, were reflected in the Programme.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussion included:

- Welcoming the officer presentation;
- Whether voluntary organisations had direct access to Household Support Funding (HSF) or if this had to be requested from Macc at the point of need;
- How many community leaders attended Zero Carbon training sessions;
- How due diligence was undertaken with regards to the distribution of HSF;
- How equality, diversity and inclusivity were embedded in the programme to ensure funding helps marginalised communities;
- Why the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic VCFSE Organisations Support Fund had been reduced to £95k;
- When an impact assessment on the programme would be undertaken and whether this would include data on the number of people supported;
- Whether the Council had any influence over funding priorities, such as the cost-of-living crisis; and
- Requesting more detail on the support provided by Conversation 2 Cash (C2C).

In introducing the item, the Deputy Leader placed on record her appreciation for the work of the VCFSE sector given the challenging circumstances they operate in and the high levels of demand they face.

The committee received a presentation which highlighted the Council's substantial investment into the VCFSE sector, despite having limited funds available, and provided an overview of the different funds that had been awarded to community groups as well as feedback from service users and funded organisations.

In response to members' queries, the Policy and Programmes Manager (Communities and VCSE) explained that the objective of Macc's distribution of HSF was to provide support directly to residents in need. He stated that Macc had referral partners across the VCFSE sector who could present to Macc with their support needs. A support request was then reviewed against specific criteria and the referring organisation would provide the support if approved, with Macc reimbursing the organisation within a fortnight. The committee was advised that this process had been in place previously to great success.

In response to a question from the Chair, it was stated that Macc undertook due diligence on all prospective referral partners and produced monthly reports on the support provided by each organisation in receipt of HSF. This report also provided information on service users by locality and communities of identity. Officers agreed to confirm outside of the meeting whether there was a monitoring process for HSF funds issued by Macc and HSF funds issued by the Council to ensure there was no duplication.

The committee was informed that there had been online and face-to-face training sessions with community leaders regarding the Zero Carbon agenda. A 'train the trainer' model was used to enable information to be shared widely across individual organisations and to ensure continuation of skills. Information on the amount of people who attended these sessions would be provided outside of the meeting.

The Policy and Programmes Manager (Communities and VCSE) advised members that an Equality Impact Assessment underpinned the whole Our Manchester Funds Programme and noted that the Council had provided an uplift in funding to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community organisations through a specific Support Fund and this would continue to be a priority. He recognised, however, that the Our Manchester Funds Programme sought to provide assistance to a range of groups and organisations which supported a variety of communities of identity.

It was stated that the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic VCFSE Organisations Support Fund had been reduced to £95k following an exceptional payment that was made to an organisation in need. Collaborative conversations were currently underway to decide how best to use this fund and the Policy and Programmes Manager (Communities and VCSE) endeavoured to involve the member who raised this question in these discussions.

In response to a query regarding an impact assessment, members were informed that one was completed in 2021 which reviewed every VCFSE organisation in receipt of Council funding and this could be repeated in the 2024/25 financial year to identify levels of funding, where funding streams came from and types of funding. The Policy and Programmes Manager (Communities and VCSE) noted that the funding landscape was complex with differing criteria between funds and that an Impact Assessment would provide a comprehensive picture of all VCFSE funding. Members were also advised that the annual report on the Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector Fund, which was last considered by the committee in March 2023, assessed the achievements of the Fund and was supported by information provided by funded organisations although the Assistant Chief Executive highlighted that it was important not to place a burdensome monitoring process on VCFSE groups.

The Chair noted that there were great community groups in each area in the city but stated that there needed to be a greater focus on community reach within the monitoring process. The Policy and Programmes Manager (Communities and VCSE) confirmed that the current monitoring process was outcome-led and that groups were asked to identify their objectives and to provide metrics and indicators to demonstrate their progress. He explained that groups were asked to provide figures on the number of service users, their communities of identity and what part of the city they were from every 6 months, and he offered to provide a brief report to the committee after each monitoring period.

It was also stated that the Council was reviewing a number of different funding opportunities to understand what an appropriate response to cost-of-living support

should be in the next financial year, citing that £600k had been allocated for this in 2023/24.

In concluding the item, the Chair thanked each volunteer who provided their time and support to local communities and asked that officers pass this message on.

**Decision:**

That the committee

1. notes the report;
2. requests further information on the number of community leaders who have attended Zero Carbon training;
3. requests confirmation on monitoring arrangements for the distribution of HSF between the Council and Macc;
4. writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to express concerns about the possibility of Household Support Fund not being continued in 2024/25;
5. welcomes the offer of 6-monthly update reports on the outcome of monitoring periods;
6. requests more detail on the support provided by Conversation 2 Cash (C2C); and
7. requests that the next update report on the Our Manchester Funds Programme references organisations which donate time and goods to their communities.

**CESC/23/54                      Final Report and Recommendations of the Crime and Antisocial Behaviour Task and Finish Group**

The committee considered a report of the Crime and Antisocial Behaviour Task and Finish Group which presented the findings of the detailed investigation undertaken by the Task and Finish Group for endorsement by the Committee.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background to antisocial behaviour (ASB) in Manchester and the work of the Task and Finish Group;
- Membership of the Task and Finish Group;
- Objectives and key lines of enquiry;
- Methodology and evidence base;
- Findings of the Task and Finish Group; and
- Recommendations of the Task and Finish Group.

The Statutory Deputy Leader thanked members involved in the Task and Finish Group for their work and comprehensive recommendations.

An amendment was requested to recommendation 1 of the Task and Finish Group to include reference to antisocial behaviour occurring in Air BnBs and other short-term let properties.

The committee was also informed that a report on responses to and progress on the recommendations would be considered by the committee in May 2024.

On behalf of the Task and Finish Group, the Chair expressed thanks to the officers and partners who were involved in the review.

**Decision:**

That the committee endorses the recommendations made by the Crime and Antisocial Behaviour Task and Finish Group, subject to an amendment to recommendation 1.

**CESC/23/55            Overview Report**

The committee considered a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which contained a list of key decisions yet to be taken within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

**Decision:**

That the report be noted, and the work programme agreed.

# **Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2023**

### **Present:**

Councillor Reid – in the Chair

Councillors N Ali, Alijah, Amin, Bano, Bell, Fletcher, Gartside, Lovecy, Marsh, Muse, Nunney, Sadler and Sharif Mahamed

### **Co-opted Voting Members:**

Mr G Cleworth, Parent Governor Representative

Mr Y Yonis, Parent Governor Representative

### **Also present:**

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People

Councillor Hacking, Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure

John Rowlands, Executive Principal and CEO, Greater Manchester Academy Trust (GMAT)

### **Apologies:**

Councillors Hewitson, Judge, Ludford and McHale

Canon S Mapledoram, Representative of the Diocese of Manchester

Ms L Smith, Primary Sector Teacher Representative

### **CYP/23/54                      Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2023.

### **CYP/23/55                      Attainment Headline outcomes 2023 (provisional)**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Education which provided a summary of the 2023 provisional outcomes of statutory assessment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. It also provided a list of actions which were being progressed to address some of the gaps in learning.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) outcomes;
- Year 1 Phonic Test outcomes;
- Key Stage 1 outcomes;
- Key Stage 2 provisional results;
- Key Stage 4 GCSE provisional headline results;
- Stage 5 A Level provisional headline results; and
- Next steps.

The Committee heard from John Rowlands, Executive Principal and CEO, Greater Manchester Academy Trust (GMAT), which was a small multi-academy trust which provided nursery, primary and secondary education in north Manchester, as well as associate leadership and management support to a local authority-maintained nursery and Children's Centres. He outlined how the Trust provided a cradle to career approach within the area, supporting children, families and communities. He reported that the area served had high levels of deprivation and that the Trust worked to understand the lived experience of the children and focused on both quality of teaching and mitigating the impact of social disadvantage, working with the Council and other partners. He highlighted the importance of young people having not only good results but also developing the right character and a positive perception of their area. He informed the Committee about the role of the Trust's Manchester Communication Research School, whose role was to impart evidence-informed practice across the region and beyond. He highlighted some of the work the Trust had been doing to secure improvements, including a focus on early years and on mental health, both in school and within families, supporting community cohesion and working with partners on issues such as housing. He provided an overview of the current position, including the impact of the pandemic, particularly on younger children, which schools were working to address, and positive results at GCSE, highlighting the progress made by children from disadvantaged backgrounds. He finished by emphasising the importance of investing in early years now in order to secure positive future outcomes for disadvantaged children.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- To welcome the approach taken by GMAT, including work with the local community;
- Competing pressures on headteachers and senior leadership teams;
- School workforce;
- International New Arrivals;
- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), including how children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and other additional needs were being accommodated, including in relation to Behaviour Policies; and
- The impact of the pandemic and lessons learnt.

John Rowlands outlined how his Trust recruited teachers, based not only on teaching ability but also on their alignment to the Trust's values and highlighted the excellent teacher training centres in the region. In response to a question on Continuing Professional Development (CPD), he reported that the Trust used a long-term model based on evidence-informed practice to address needs and gaps in the school workforce. He informed Members how the Trust had responded to the arrival of 26 pupils evacuated from Afghanistan, supporting them and their families. He advised that there was a recruitment and retention challenge in schools in relation to both teachers and the wider school workforce and highlighted the Trust's retention policy. In response to a question on advice for secondary headteachers in relation to supporting the transition of pupils into Year 7 where they had not come from a primary school within the same Trust, he reported that it was important to work with

the Council on excellence in transition and to understand the context and lived experience of those children entering the school. He reported that his Trust had put in place a pastoral tracker across 17 schools in north Manchester which helped with obtaining a full picture of a child and family's circumstances and he advised that parents were key partners who were experts on their circumstances and it was important to work effectively with both the family and professional partners.

The Assistant Director of Education reported that all schools were expected to make reasonable adjustments for children with SEND, including in relation to the application of behaviour policies, and she highlighted some of the support available to schools, including the Inclusion Toolkit, outreach support from special schools and the Autism in Schools Project. In response to a Member's question about children who had not yet received a diagnosis, she advised that the approach taken was to meet the presenting needs, rather than waiting for a diagnosis.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People highlighted the positive impact of Manchester schools on the city's children and the impact that not being in school or early years settings during the pandemic had had, stating that more time should be spent as a country considering the impact of this and the mitigation needed to address it. In response to a question about increasing numbers of children with SEND, he advised that there was a challenge in identifying whether some children had missed developmental milestones because of the pandemic or had longer-term additional needs. He advised that further information on the work the Council was doing could be included in a future report on SEND.

The Assistant Director of Education outlined some of the learning from the pandemic, including the importance of a holistic approach from schools, continuing education as much as possible while children were not in school, particularly in relation to literacy, and the disproportionate impact on young children from missing out on early socialisation and the importance of taking steps to address that quickly after that period.

In response to a question about teaching children who had English as an Additional Language (EAL), the Director of Education reported that this was part of the routine work of some Manchester schools who had become experts in this but that in cases where children from, for example, Afghanistan, were placed in schools which did not have that experience, the schools were being paired up with more experienced schools which could share their expertise. In response to a further question about EAL, John Rowlands reported that his Trust had five tiers to reflect the different levels of English that pupil might have with a separate approach for each tier, which could include enabling them to study their heritage language.

The Chair advised that the Committee would receive a further report at a later date with a breakdown of the results including by gender and ethnicity and would then be able to look into these factors in more detail. She highlighted the experience of white disadvantaged boys and the importance of parental support and expectations. She welcomed the work that GMAT was doing, including working with children from their early years throughout their education as well as working with the community, and asked what more support the Council and Councillors could provide, for example, in relation to housing. She highlighted the challenges families were experiencing in



relation to housing and how the Council was working to address this. She also asked how budget constraints impacted on the Trust's ability to do this work.

John Rowlands reported that GMAT had an effective partnership relationship with the Council and other organisations such as Shelter to address housing issues. He acknowledged the Chair's point about constraints on school budgets and advised that efficiencies could be achieved as part of a multi-academy trust as well as by sharing resources across the wider group of schools which were part of the Family Zone.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

### **CYP/23/56                    A progress update on Childcare Sufficiency 2023 and the Early Years Capital Programme**

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which provided an overview of the Manchester's Childcare Sufficiency Report 2023 and a summary of progress to date on the capital investment made in the Council's Early Years estate.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- The Early Years National Context;
- Sufficiency of childcare and early learning opportunities in Manchester;
- New childcare entitlements from April 2024;
- Provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
- Capital improvements to the Early Years estate;
- Phase 2 update;
- Additional developments to the Early Years estate; and
- Lease reviews.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- To welcome the focus on training the workforce;
- The decarbonisation bids for six Early Years buildings;
- Concern that the funding to develop and expand wraparound childcare in Manchester for primary school aged children from working households only related to term-time; and
- That some of the areas with insufficient 2-year-old places to meet potential demand were very close together (for example, Old Moat, Withington and Fallowfield) and what was being done to address this.

The Lead for Statutory Area Early Year Access and Sufficiency reported that she would speak to officers in Capital Programmes to get an update on the decarbonisation bids. In response to a Member's question, she provided an overview of the Dingley's Promise Inclusive Practice Training and stated that she would check how FASD was covered in the training and respond to the Member.

She acknowledged the Member's point about working parents needing wraparound childcare during school holidays and stated that it was hoped that developing sustainable wraparound provision during term-time, which included supporting families to claim all their entitlements, would help providers to extend the offer further.

The Director of Education highlighted the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) scheme which ran during the school holidays for children who were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM).

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People reported that a lot of work was taking place on Early Years buildings which would have a demonstrable impact on the buildings' carbon footprint, whether or not the bids referred to in the report were successful.

The Chair expressed concern about changes in immigration rules, levels of pay and qualification requirements in the Early Years sector affecting recruitment and retention. She highlighted that the new funding for wraparound care was for the set-up costs and that parents would still have to pay for their children to attend breakfast clubs and after-school clubs under the current Government. She informed Members about the difficulties some parents in her ward were experiencing in finding childcare places. She asked what was being done to increase capacity in the Early Years sector as the free offer expanded, including the recruitment of additional childminders, advising that billboards could be used, as well as reaching out to black and ethnic minority communities. She expressed concern that asbestos removal work to the Early Years estate in her area had been carried out during the day and advised that it should be carried out on evenings and weekends.

The Lead for Statutory Area Early Year Access and Sufficiency confirmed that recruitment and retention of staff was the main issue affecting the sustainability of the Early Years sector. She reported that the Council was working with Greater Manchester colleagues on strategies to address this, including training opportunities, as well as raising this issue through consultations. She stated that this had included sending representation on the challenges being faced to the Education Select Committee, including highlighting that pay rates were low. She acknowledged Members' concerns about neighbouring wards which had sufficiency issues, advising that her team looked at this wider picture, and she provided an update on the areas Members had raised and work to improve sufficiency, including exploring options for existing providers to expand their provision and supporting providers with the recruitment and retention of staff. In response to comments from the Chair about encouraging schools to increase their Early Years capacity, including taking children from the age of two, she confirmed that this was something which could be explored further in areas where more places were needed. She informed Members about a consultation that the Council was currently undertaking with childminders in the city, including making them aware of the new funding streams. She reported that due diligence was being carried out in relation to all asbestos removal work.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People expressed concern that the Government was expanding entitlement to free childcare without funding the sector properly. He informed Members about plans to better recognise

and reward the work of childcare providers, including an event at Gorton Monastery in February 2024.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

### **CYP/23/57                      Post-16 Education Employment Training Strategic Plan 2022- 25 - Progress Update**

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which provided an update on work done by the Council which had had a positive impact on increasing the number of young people accessing Education Employment Training (EET) opportunities in the city over the last 2 years. It also outlined the plans for this work moving forward which aligned with the Our Manchester Forward to 2025 Strategy and Manchester Inclusion Strategy 2022-25. The report outlined how the cohort of young people post 16 was set to increase year on year which was causing significant pressure on places across the post 16 sector. It stated that plans were in place to expand existing provision and to open new provisions but there was no planned growth of places for technical courses. It also stated that projected continued growth of the post 16 cohort in the next few years as well as the planned reform of Level 2 technical education might adversely impact on the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training going forward.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Background/context;
- Progress to date in relation to;
  - Young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET);
  - Post-16 provision;
  - The Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI); and
  - Qualification reform; and
- Business engagement and Skills for Life.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Tracking young people who had been identified through the RONI after they had entered college and supporting them beyond the first term;
- That NEET prevention work needed to be FASD-, neurobehaviourally- and trauma-informed;
- To request that a representative of Career Connect be invited when this item was considered again;
- The approach to supporting young people with SEND who were at risk of becoming NEET;
- The lack of clarity on post-16 technical pathways, which was making it difficult for schools and students to prepare;
- Mentoring opportunities;
- The need for additional sixth form provision in north Manchester; and
- Challenges in finding work experience placements.

The Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure emphasised the importance of urgently addressing the pressure on post-16 technical and vocational places, highlighting the impact on the quality of the post-16 offer and on the number of young people who were NEET and he reported that the Council was working closely with partners on this.

The Post-16 Lead outlined how young people who had been identified in Year 11 as at risk of becoming NEET were supported, stating that this continued over the summer period. He reported that checks were then carried out early in the new academic year on whether they had started at their planned destination and, if not, further support was quickly put into place. He informed Members that in the last academic year, schools had been encouraged to identify young people earlier, in Year 10. He informed Members that work took place with partners to provide appropriate support for young people with SEND who were at risk of becoming NEET. He also informed Members about work to provide a range of opportunities for young people, beyond traditional college places, including providers who could provide appropriate opportunities for targeted groups of young people.

The Director of Education informed Members that a member of staff from Career Connect was co-located in special schools for children with social, emotional and mental health needs and the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) so they would have a good understanding of and relationship with the young people they were supporting. She reported that a lot of other special schools had sixth forms so would continue to work with and support their young people. She advised that, for young people with SEND in mainstream schools, the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) in the school would work with the SENCO in the college on their transition. She informed Members that all secondary schools had access to a mentoring programme. She acknowledged the Member's point about the need for more sixth form provision in north Manchester, advising that the Council was working hard in exploring options to address this gap.

In response to a Member's comments about supporting young people who had been identified through RONI beyond their first term at college, the Director of Education reported that post-16 settings had pastoral departments to support students. The Post-16 Lead reported that there was also a transition period and that, if a young person left their course or training provision, they could receive support from Career Connect.

The Director of Education reported that the specification for the technical pathway was still unclear. She reported that the T-Level was an equivalent level to A-Levels and a pathway to university but could be too difficult for some 16-year-olds wanting to take a technical route, who needed another qualification as a stepping stone, such as a BTEC qualification; however, she advised, that the Government planned to abolish BTEC qualifications for subjects which had a T-Level.

The Chair reported that some schools wanted to provide a sixth form but were unable to obtain the funding for this. She asked about student places at Manchester College, following the closure of some of its sites. She commented on the changes in the approach to supporting young people with learning disabilities, enabling

greater independence. She reported that, following the abolition of Connexions and Aim Higher, a lot of support for students was now provided by colleges themselves but that this impacted on their budgets. She expressed concern at the gap between Level 2 qualifications and Level 3 T-Levels. She highlighted the role Social Value could play in providing apprenticeships and supporting young people.

In response to comments from Members about funding to expand post-16 places, the Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People advised that the Council had duties for sufficiency at post-16 without having the funding but had been working creatively to try to address sufficiency issues as well as lobbying the Government. He acknowledged the importance of work experience placements, advising that this had been raised through the Our Year engagement and that addressing this would be a priority within the work to become a UNICEF Child-Friendly City.

The Director of Education reported that Manchester College had rationalised its estate, closing some of its sites while installing state-of-the-art facilities at the city centre and Openshaw campuses, in order to deliver technical qualifications, and that this had not been a reduction in student places.

### **Decision**

To request that a representative of Career Connect be invited when this item is considered again.

[Councillor Bridges declared a personal interest as a Board Member of the Manchester College and Governor of the LTE Group.]

### **CYP/23/58                      Overview Report**

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

### **Decision**

To note the report and agree the work programme.

# Health Scrutiny Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2023

### Present:

Councillor Green – in the Chair  
Councillors Bayunu, Cooley, Curley, Hilal, Karney, Muse and Wilson

**Apologies:** Councillor Reeves

### Also present:

Councillor T. Robinson, Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care  
Councillor Chambers, Deputy Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care  
Councillor Midgley, Deputy Leader  
Councillor Rawlins, Executive Member for Environment and Transport  
Councillor Shilton Godwin, Chair of Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee  
Karin Connell, Strategic Lead, Health Equity and Inclusion, Manchester Integrated Care Partnership  
Darren Parsonage, Head of Operations (Vaccination/Designated Clinical Officer) SEND, NHS Greater Manchester (Manchester)  
Jo Walby, Chief Executive, Mustard Tree  
Dr Shaun Jackson, General Practitioner, Urban Village Medical Practice  
Liz Thomas, Homeless Health Nurse, Urban Village Medical Practice  
Jackie McVan, Head of Services Greater Manchester, CGL (Change Grow Live)  
Kevin, Service User, CGL  
Jay, Service User, CGL  
Dave, Service User, CGL  
Dr Fiona Watson, General Practitioner, Hawthorn Medical Centre  
Dr James Adams, General Practitioner, Hawthorn Medical Centre  
Dr Laura Parker, Specialist Trainee Registrar in Public Health  
Anna Bond, Deputy Director Manchester Climate Change Agency

### **HSC/23/53      Minutes**

### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2023.

### **HSC/23/54      Health and Homelessness**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Public Health and the Executive Director of Adult Social Services that provided an overview of the work on health and homelessness in Manchester.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Describing that work was co-ordinated through the Manchester Health and Homelessness Task Group which had been established in 2016 under the leadership of the Director of Public Health;
- Reporting that the Health and Homelessness Task Group had been established as part of the Manchester Homelessness Partnership (MHP) and launched with the Manchester Homelessness Charter in 2016;
- Many people with lived experience of homelessness were involved in co-writing the Manchester Homelessness Charter which was an integral part of the current MHP Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023;
- Reporting that to support and accelerate the successes of the MHP, and collaboration with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Council had begun a refreshed transformation programme, A Place Called Home, in 2022;
- An update on relevant local and national strategies;
- Key statistics and epidemiological information;
- Key health statistics from the National Health Needs Audit Report;
- Describing the work of the various partners on the Task Group; and
- Conclusion and next steps.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- The Committee paid tribute to all partners working across the city to support homeless people;
- Stating that the government had failed to respond to the issue of homelessness;
- Noting that this failure placed a significant pressure on already depleted public services;
- Did the Urban Village Medical Practice track homeless people to ensure they maintained contact with health services and attended health appointments;
- Commenting that racism also needed to be considered as a health issue;
- What was the criteria for an individual to access support from Mustard Tree;
- Noting that when an asylum seeker was granted Leave to Remain they would often then present as homeless as they would lose any accommodation provided by the Home Office; and
- What were the challenges to the Transformation Programme, A Place Called Home.

Dr Shaun Jackson, General Practitioner, Urban Village Medical Practice described that the Practice had been supporting homeless people for approximately 25 years, servicing 14,000 patients with an integrated homelessness provision. He described that the approach to this work had evolved over the years by working in partnership with commissioners. He described that the pillars on which they approached this homeless work was delivering primary care; providing in-reach work for homeless people admitted to Manchester Royal Infirmary; providing out-reach services; and advocating on the issue of homelessness and health across the wider health system, both locally and nationally. He commented that the NHS needed to invest in homelessness health services reiterating the point that homelessness needed to be considered as a health problem and that early deaths amongst homeless people was as a result of unmet medical need. In terms of gaps in health provision for homeless people he stated that he would identify appropriate care and support for homeless people with complex needs, particularly older homeless people. He said there was a

lack of the correct specialist support in the correct care environment for such individuals. He also commented on the challenge in accessing mental health services and substance misuse services for homeless people.

Dr Shaun Jackson, General Practitioner, Urban Village Medical Practice said that they did attempt to maintain continuity of care for homeless people, recognising that an individual could be temporarily housed in another area of the city or another borough. He said that they would have individual conversations on how to access the most appropriate health care, recognising that travelling to the Urban Village Medical Practice would often not be appropriate for an individual. In terms of supporting homeless people to attend appointments at other settings, he described that homeless people would use the Practice as a Care of Address so they became aware of appointments and the Practice could proactively support individuals.

Liz Thomas, Homeless Health Nurse, Urban Village Medical Practice described that the informal tracking of homeless individuals was undertaken by partnership working and dialogue across a range of agencies.

Reflecting on the comments from Dr Jackson, the Chair noted that the Committee would be considering a report on palliative care at the 7 February 2024 meeting and Dr Jackson would be invited to the meeting to contribute to the discussions.

Jo Walby, Chief Executive, Mustard Tree addressed the Committee and said that she represented the non-statutory (i.e. voluntary) sector across the city who were working in partnership to support homeless people. She commented that the criteria for accessing support from Mustard Tree was anyone experiencing hardship. She said that Mustard Tree could not refer or allocate accommodation for homeless people, adding that the Homeless Team within the Council dealt with allocations. She said that they supported homeless people to access services, including health services, by helping people register with a GP and access addiction services. In addition, they would case manage more complex cases to support individuals attend appointments etc. She stated that they were recognised as a trusted voice who would advocate on behalf of homeless people. She paid tribute to the work undertaken by the Director of Public Health and the Executive Director of Adult Social Services for the work they had undertaken to bring partners and Council services together in Manchester to respond to this complex and challenging issue.

Jo Walby, Chief Executive, Mustard Tree acknowledged the comments raised regarding Home Office decisions and the granting of Leave to Remain for asylum seekers. She described that there was little or no communication from the Home Office in regard to asylum seekers being housed in hotels in the city and referred to the increased demand on their services when this had happened.

In response to a specific question asked regarding the data provided in relation to old age in the demographic characteristics of people owed a statutory homelessness duty by Manchester City Council, the Director of Public Health stated that further information would be circulated following the meeting. He further commented that the issue of structural racism and discrimination was understood and was a key stream of work as part of the Making Manchester Fairer work that was regularly reported to the Committee.



The Deputy Leader described that the Transformation Programme (A Place Called Home) operated in a challenging context with the cumulative impact of austerity, Covid-19, the cost-of-living crisis, and the impact of national decisions on the asylum and migration process continuing to impact and exacerbate hardship for local communities, more often those with the least resources. She further reiterated the call for an end to Section 21 (no fault evictions) and for the immediate unfreezing of the Local Housing Allowance. She stated that despite these challenges the Homelessness Team was working hard to reduce the number of homeless families being accommodated in Bed and Breakfast settings. In response to the comments made regarding asylum seekers, she said that Manchester displayed a humane and compassionate response.

The Director of Public Health commented that the action plan for the Transformation Programme was provided as an appendix to the report and that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment would also inform this activity.

Jackie McVan, Head of Services Greater Manchester, CGL (Change Grow Live) stated that one positive outcome from the pandemic had been strengthened relationships between CGL and Mustard Tree. She also stated that another legacy of the pandemic had been the adoption of on-line support services that some people found more appropriate for their circumstances and needs. She described the increasing demand on services, particularly for substance misuse services. She also emphasised the issue of social isolation and loneliness experienced by homeless people placed in accommodation. She commented on the need to challenge the stigma associated with homelessness and substance misuse.

The Committee then heard from Kevin, Dave and Jay who spoke of their individual lived experiences of homelessness. The Committee thanked them for attending and sharing their powerful testimonies.

The Committee expressed their gratitude to all guests for attending and contributing to the meeting.

## **Decision**

That a delegation from Manchester, comprising of partners working to support homeless people across the city visit the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to highlight the situation in Manchester and to lobby for additional resources to address homelessness.

## **HSC/23/55 Health Provision For Asylum Seeker Contingency Hotels**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Public Health and the Deputy Place Based Lead, NHS Greater Manchester (Manchester Locality) that provided an overview of health provision for Asylum Seeker Contingency (ASC) hotels in the city of Manchester.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background, noting that in July 2020, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning (MHCC), the Clinical Commissioning Group for the city of Manchester at the time, was directed by NHS England (NHSE) to work with the Home Office, their provider Serco and other stakeholders such as Manchester City Council to commission primary care services for people placed in the ASC hotels.
- Listing what primary care providers were expected to deliver as a minimum;
- Discussion of the main issues and mitigating actions, including information on the NHS Greater Manchester Migrant Health Group that had been established;
- Describing the approach to commissioning primary care services to meet the needs of people seeking asylum living in the hotels;
- Highlighting some of the opportunities identified to build on the learning and expertise developed through this work, to better meet the needs of people seeking asylum, refugees and other migrants in the future; and
- Noting that the work described supported Manchester City Council's commitment to ensure that Manchester was a city of sanctuary for people seeking asylum.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Further information on the migrant health passport;
- Information was sought on the NHS Greater Manchester Migrant Health Group, noting that issues experienced by asylum seekers were not confined to those accommodated in ASC hotels;
- Did asylum seekers have a choice as to which GP they registered with; and
- An update on Manchester becoming a City of Sanctuary.

Dr Fiona Watson, General Practitioner, Hawthorn Medical Centre described the work delivered to support asylum seekers housed in ASC hotels. She referred to a particular hotel that housed approximately 150 men. She described the integrated approach to help individuals access primary care services. She said that the team comprised of a multidisciplinary team, including GPs, Health Care Assistants and Nurses who would be present at the hotel once a week. She described that having a physical presence in the hotel helped foster positive relationships with both Serco, who had responsibility to provide properties for initial and dispersed accommodation requirements to support the welfare of asylum seekers, and the residents. She advised that the clinical priorities were infection screening, particularly for Tuberculosis; safeguarding; mental health and wellbeing work.

Darren Parsonage, Head of Operations (Vaccination/Designated Clinical Officer) SEND, NHS Greater Manchester (Manchester) stated that the intention was to standardise the good work described by Dr Watson across all ASC hotels. He commented that, due to the nature of the asylum system and the fact that some hotel residents would move to different accommodation during their asylum-seeking journey, one of the providers had been developing a "migrant health passport" for residents who had longer term health needs to support continuity of care should the resident move on. In response to a specific question, he said that an individual could choose to register with any GP. He added that the priorities of the GM Migrant Health Group were access to primary care; infectious diseases screening and transition.

The Director of Public Health stated that a lot of learning had been obtained over the previous five years in relation to this area of activity. He added that the GM Migrant Health Group recognised that the health issues experienced by asylum seekers were not confined to residents of ASC hotels and would be experienced by asylum seekers in the wider community.

The Deputy Leader described that a steering group had been established to agree the Terms of Reference and progress the strategy for Manchester to enable it to become accredited as a City of Sanctuary. She said this steering group included people with lived experience. She said that a commitment to becoming a City of Sanctuary had been agreed at full Council in July 2023. She said this meant that the City Council, health organisations, other public bodies, as well as the voluntary and faith sector, would work together to improve services for those seeking sanctuary in Manchester. The Deputy Leader concluded by stating that Manchester stood in solidarity with all people seeking asylum.

The Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care paid tribute to all partners working across the city to support asylum seekers. He paid particular tribute to Sarah Doran, Assistant Director of Public Health for her work and continued dedication in this area of work.

The Committee expressed their gratitude to all guests for attending and contributing to the meeting.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

## **HSC/23/56      The Impact of Climate Change on Health**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Public Health that built upon previous health scrutiny reports “An Introduction to the Impact of Climate Change on Health and Healthcare in Manchester” (February 2022) and “Climate Change - The Impact of the Recent Heatwave” (December 2022).

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing a brief overview of how and why climate change impacted the health of Manchester residents and what activities were underway to monitor and mitigate these impacts;
- Discussion of the impact of climate change on NHS Organisations in Manchester;
- Discussion of the impact of climate change on the food system;
- Discussion of the impact of climate change on migration;
- Mitigation, adaptation and emergency response;
- Activities to reduce carbon emissions;
- Activities to reduce air pollution;
- Discussion of adaptation to climate change;
- Adaptation to air pollution;
- Heatwave Plan, noting the importance of having robust emergency response plans in case of severe adverse weather events;

- Recognising the co-benefits to health from climate action, such as the increased provision of greenspace and/or the promotion of active travel;
- Describing how work undertaken as part of the Making Manchester Fairer strategy helped to recognise and minimise health inequalities exacerbated by climate change; and
- Next steps.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- What was being done to communicate climate change activities with residents;
- Paying tribute to the work undertaken by staff to support and assist residents in receipt of Adult Social Care in the Didsbury East Ward during the evacuation of homes as a result of flooding;
- Did the introduction of the 30mph speed limit on Princess Road / Princess Parkway improve air quality;
- Noting the cost of living crisis and the pressures experienced by residents and how this impacted on their ability to make informed choices, such as purchasing an electric car to reduce their carbon emissions; and
- Noting the impact of housing and the ability to regulate temperature during extreme weather events and the impact this had on health.

The Committee heard from Councillor Shilton Godwin, Chair of Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee. She provided a testimony that had been provided by a medical practitioner that described the detrimental health impacts poor air quality had on young people. She concluded by emphasising the need to consider climate change as a health issue.

Dr Laura Parker, Specialist Trainee Registrar in Public Health stated that car idling was a particular issue that contributed to poor air quality. In regard to the specific question raised regarding the impact of reducing speed limits to 30mph and air quality, she advised that any analysis of this would be circulated.

Anna Bond, Deputy Director Manchester Climate Change Agency responded to the discussion regarding housing during extreme weather events. She said that the refreshed Climate Change Framework included a number of work streams that included retrofitting of domestic properties and net zero building standards. She also stated that the importance of access to green space was recognised and all the work was devised through the lens of Making Manchester Fairer.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport emphasised the need for a just transition in relation to climate change. She emphasised the need to deliver reliable, affordable and connected public transport system to provide a viable alternative to the car. She said that the ongoing delivery and roll out of the Bee Network would help deliver this ambition. She informed the Committee that the Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee would be considering a suite of reports at their December meeting that include communications and resident engagement.

The Director of Public noted the comments made regarding damp and mould and advised that work was ongoing with local Housing Providers to address this. He also

commented that the learning from the recent heatwaves was ongoing and referred to the weather alerts that were monitored throughout the year and forwarded to the weather alert group via an automated process, in addition to the key public health messaging at such times.

The Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care paid tribute to the Public Health Team for their work during periods of extreme weather events. He described that this work continued to be delivered in the absence of government leadership on the important issue of climate change.

### **Decision**

To note the report.

### **HSC/23/57      Overview Report**

The report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which contained key decisions within the Committee's remit and responses to previous recommendations was submitted for comment. Members were also invited to agree the Committee's future work programme.

### **Decision**

The Committee notes the report and agrees the work programme.

# Health Scrutiny Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2024

### Present:

Councillor Green – in the Chair

Councillors Bayunu, Cooley, Curley, Hilal, Karney, Muse, Reeves and Wilson

### Also present:

Councillor T. Robinson, Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care

Councillor Chambers, Deputy Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care

Councillor White, Executive Member for Housing and Development

Tom Hinchcliffe, Deputy Place Based Lead for Health and Social Care Integration, NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care

Sam Bradbury, Deputy Director of Integrated Commissioning, Manchester Local Care Organisation

Julie Taylor, Locality Director of Strategy/Provider Collaboration (Manchester) NHS Greater Manchester

Dr Sohail Munshi, Chief Medical Officer, Manchester Local Care Organisation

Coral Higgins, Cancer Reform Manager, NHS Greater Manchester

Graham Mellors, Strategic Lead for Population Health Management, Manchester Local Care Organisation

### **HSC/24/01      Minutes**

#### **Decision**

1. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2023.
2. To receive the minutes of the Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust: Improvement Plan Task and Finish Group meeting held on 19 December 2023.

### **HSC/24/02      Support For People With Complex Needs And The Role Of Social Workers & Tackling Alcohol Harm in Manchester**

The Committee considered the two-part report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Services and the Director of Public Health. The first report provided a full description of the services provided by the Manchester social work teams, who supported adults with complex needs; the second report focused on efforts to tackle alcohol harm in Manchester and Greater Manchester.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Information relating to the Substance Misuse Teams, including a description of their key areas of work;
- Information relating to the work of the Entrenched Rough Sleepers Social Work Team;

- Discussion of the approach to the continuous development of services, noting the commitment to research and evidence-based practice;
- Discussion of the meaning of alcohol harm;
- Consideration of alcohol harm and inequalities, noting that increased levels of deprivation were associated with increased levels of alcohol related harm;
- Data relating to the levels of alcohol harm in Manchester;
- Current activities to tackle alcohol harm in Manchester; and
- Next steps both at a Manchester and Greater Manchester level.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Noting the proliferation of 24/7 alcohol delivery services and the detrimental impact this had on health outcomes;
- Noting increased levels of alcohol consumption during the pandemic;
- A Member described her personal family experience of alcohol harm;
- In a similar way that the tobacco industry was challenged, Manchester needed to tackle the alcohol industry to reduce alcohol-related harm;
- What was the process for a family member or carer to access support as a carer;
- Recognising the need to not demonise or curtail people for enjoying alcohol responsibly;
- A Member commented that in his ward every application for any new off-licence was vigorously opposed;
- Public Health should be formally recognised as a licensing objective;
- Welcoming the reported Family Centred rehabilitation initiative and requesting that a report on this be submitted to the relevant scrutiny committee at an appropriate time;
- Noting the impact of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) and noting the motion on this specific issue at the meeting of Council held 29 November 2023, and requesting that a report on this be submitted to the relevant scrutiny committee at an appropriate time;
- Noting the challenge presented by grant funding of services; and
- Requesting an update on the impact of the "Communities in Charge of Alcohol" pilot that had been launched in Miles Platting and Newton Heath in 2017.

The Director of Public Health welcomed the comments from the Committee and stated that the views expressed in regard to the alcohol industry and the 24/7 availability of alcohol were shared by the Association of Directors of Public Health.

The Registrar in Public Health described the multi-agency approach to consider all licensing applications submitted and where appropriate submit objections for consideration by Licensing Panels. She made reference to conditions and modifications to licences as a result of this approach.

The Director of Public Health stated that a round table discussion would be convened in February 2024 with practitioners and experts participating to develop actions to progress the work on FASD, noting the motion that had been passed by Council.

The Executive Director of Adult Social Services informed the Committee that anyone could refer themselves for an assessment under the Care Act. She acknowledged that consideration needed to be given to promote this more widely.

The Service Manager (Complex Needs), Adult Social Care commented that the Family Centred rehabilitation model had been developed by the staff working within the Alcohol Team. She said that this model utilised a number of therapies, including Trauma Informed Therapy, to best meet the needs of the individual. She commented that the intention was to build upon this model and work with Children's Services, adding that an update on this work could be provided to the relevant scrutiny committee at the appropriate time.

The Director of Public Health said that NHS England funding for Alcohol Care Teams was due to end in March 2024 and discussions were currently underway to look at transitional funding arrangements so the services could be sustained in 2024/25. He added that Wythenshawe Hospital had mainstreamed this service and options to adopt a similar approach would be explored at the other two hospital sites, noting that this changed its funding status and arrangements.

The Director of Public Health said that the formal evaluation of the Communities in Charge of Alcohol pilot had not been undertaken due to the pandemic, however the lessons learnt from this pilot would be used, along with the underlying principles to roll this programme out more widely.

The Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care stated that despite the failure of government to tackle the issue of alcohol harm it remained a priority for Manchester. He paid tribute to the staff working in the Substance Misuse Team. He further commented that FASD was considered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

## **Decision**

The Committee recommends that the Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care and the Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee engage with the Mayor of Greater Manchester with the view to establishing a Manchester Manifesto to tackle the alcohol industry on the issue of alcohol-related harm.

## **HSC/24/03      Cancer Screening Update**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Public Health and the Chief Medical Officer, Manchester Local Care Organisation that provided the latest position in relation to cancer screening programmes for the population of Manchester.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- The latest available screening uptake figures for Manchester in relation to the national cancer screening programmes, noting that there were currently three screening programmes for the prevention or early detection of cancer, namely Breast, Bowel and Cervical screening;
- The role of the Manchester Population Health Management Board within the Manchester Local Care Organisation;
- Information on the actions that were being taken across Manchester to address low uptake and coverage, with a greater focus on health inequalities; and



- Describing the Greater Manchester targeted lung health check programme, and the plan for Manchester.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Stating that the key message was that screening saved lives;
- What was the process for following up on bowel cancer testing kits that were not returned;
- What was the current advice in relation to prostate cancer;
- More information was requested in relation to the Equality Impact Assessments undertaken in relation to cancer screening;
- What were the ages of people accessing screening services;
- Welcoming the mobile mammogram unit at North Manchester General Hospital; and
- Noting the reported issues and limitations to gynae services at Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) as a result of staff shortages, recruitment processes and training for new staff.

The Chief Medical Officer, Manchester Local Care Organisation addressed the discussions in relation to the data presented in the report and stated that it was important to differentiate between the rates of screening rather than incidents of cancer diagnosis. He made reference to the Health Development Coordinators and the Manchester Population Health Management Board (PHM). He said that PHM plans were built on their work in communities, building positive relationships with local communities and local partners in the VCSE and, importantly, primary care. He commented that all this work was data led and evidence based. In terms of the age of cohorts and screening he commented that this was in accordance with national clinical guidance.

The Chief Medical Officer, Manchester Local Care Organisation discussed the need to consider health literacy adding that this could be a barrier to people accessing screening services, making reference to his own experience when receiving a testing kit. He commented that consideration needed to be given to the language used to ensure it was appropriate. He commented on the issue of trust amongst some communities and health services and the need to work to tackle these barriers to screening and health services more generally, noting that it was recognised that a 'one size fits all' approach was not appropriate.

The Chief Medical Officer, Manchester Local Care Organisation said that the national advice in relation to prostate cancer was to contact your GP if you experienced any change when passing urine and/or noticed blood in your urine. The Cancer Reform Manager (Manchester), NHS Greater Manchester made reference to the 2023 'This Van Can' prostate cancer awareness roadshow. The roadshow had visited sites across Greater Manchester between May and October 2023 as part of an NHS pilot. It was targeted at black men aged over 45 who were at greater risk of getting prostate cancer.

The Chief Medical Officer, Manchester Local Care Organisation advised that the issues reported at MFT in relation to gynae services were being addressed, noting that the issue of staff recruitment and retention was a national issue. He added that

the impact of the pandemic on NHS backlogs of work remained an issue. The Cancer Reform Manager (Manchester), NHS Greater Manchester informed the Committee that MFT had established a cervical screening facility for their staff in an attempt to increase the take up rates of screening.

The Cancer Reform Manager (Manchester), NHS Greater Manchester said that if a bowel testing kit was not returned, a second kit was issued. If this was not returned the patient was classed as a non-responder. She said that an individual could request a kit at any time if they had missed the initial invitation. With regard to the question asked in relation to the Equality Impact Assessments she advised that these were undertaken by commissioners and that Health Equality Audits were also undertaken.

The Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care welcomed the report and paid tribute to the collaborative approach of the cancer alliance. He further recognised the important work of the Population Health Management Board, chaired by the Chief Medical Officer, Manchester Local Care Organisation, noting this was responsive to address the needs of residents. He further made reference to the good practice demonstrated by the exercise undertaken by the Miles Platting, Newton Heath and Moston Primary Care Network, who between June and early December 2023 had called more than 400 eligible patients who had not returned their screening kits to discuss the importance of screening and identify any barriers, noting that as a result, 220 screening kits were reissued.

## **Decisions**

The Committee recommend;

1. That the Director of Public Health, in consultation with relevant partners review the letters issued with bowel screening kits to ensure the language and terminology used is appropriate.
2. That the Director of Public Health, in consultation with relevant partners, give consideration to the use of videos as a visual medium to promote the importance of cancer screening.

## **HSC/24/04      Enabling Independence Accommodation Strategy Update**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Services & Strategic Director (Growth and Development) that provided an update on the delivery of the Enabling Independence Accommodation Strategy for Manchester (2022-2032) which was considered and supported by the Committee on 12 October 2022, prior to its approval at Executive in November 2022.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Noting that the key aim of the strategy was to improve housing with care and support options to meet people's needs and better enable their independence;

- Describing that it was a partnership strategy, developed between Adults, Children's, Homelessness, Strategic Housing, Property Development, and the Manchester Housing Providers Partnership;
- Reporting progress to date, noting the progress made in the first year of this 10-year strategy;
- Describing the four key objectives of the strategy;
- Reporting the key stages of delivery of the strategy;
- Discussion of the assessment of current provision;
- Discussion of future demand and how this need would be addressed;
- Consideration of the building upon our care and support at home services;
- Case studies; and
- Next steps.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Welcoming the report and recognising the importance of supporting people to remain living safely in their communities, close to their families and support network;
- Recognising that this important work was integral and important for individuals and communities;
- Welcoming the scale of work delivered by the Manchester Equipment and Adaptations Partnership and Community Alarm and Technology Enabled Care service;
- Recognising the importance of adaptations to support people to remain living safely in their own homes;
- The need to promote widely the positive and important initiatives described within the report;
- Welcoming the inclusion of the case studies;
- Did the work and ambitions described meet the needs of the population;
- Noting the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding was not sufficient to keep up with increased demand and construction cost and calling for adequate funding from government; and
- Commenting that investment in these initiatives saved money in the longer term as individuals were not accessing costly acute or care settings.

The Commissioning Manager Strategic Housing stated that the service was continually exploring all opportunities to deliver future schemes. She commented that the Housing Needs Assessment would inform future commissioning considerations, noting that future schemes would consider the housing needs of young disabled people.

The Executive Director of Adult Social Services acknowledged the discussion relating to the DFG, adding that it was not sufficient to meet the demand. She described that despite the challenges the service remained committed to being innovative and suggested that Members undertake a visit to the Smart Suite, a new facility that had opened in Manchester that allowed people to see and try out the equipment and adaptations that could keep them independent at home. The Members welcomed this invitation.

The Assistant Director Adult Social Services (Commissioning) welcomed the recognition of the work of the Manchester Equipment and Adaptations Partnership and Community Alarm and Technology Enabled Care service, adding that it was important to record and report these activities as it supported independent living and helped support the case for an increase in the DFG. She further paid tribute to the partnership work and positive relationship established with housing providers to deliver these interventions to support residents.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development paid tribute to the partnership approach to deliver the strategy. He commented that the relationship between housing and health outcomes was understood and the ongoing stated commitment to partnership working would help deliver the best outcomes for Manchester residents.

The Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care stated that he welcomed the many positive comments from the Committee adding that the report clearly articulated the ambitions for the city. He stated that the strategy recognised the nature and importance of place. He said that despite the government's failure to adequately fund and acknowledge the importance of this work, Manchester had taken the lead nationally on this issue.

The Chair in concluding this item of business paid tribute to the work described and requested that an update report be provided to the Committee at an appropriate time.

## **Decision**

To note the report and that a visit to the Smart Suite be arranged for Members.

### **HSC/24/05      Community Health Transformation Programme: Community Podiatry Service Change**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Director of Integrated Commissioning, Community Health that provided the recommendations made by Manchester Local Care Organisation Executive to reduce variation in community health podiatry services as part of the Community Health Transformation Programme.

The Committee was asked to note the Manchester Local Care Organisation recommendation to remove the variation in the community health service podiatry offer; and to endorse the view that this action did not constitute a substantial variation.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Describing the context and rationale to standardise provision for podiatry services across Manchester;
- To amend the service offer to ensure consistent access criteria; and
- To align budgets to the size and need of people in the neighbourhoods.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- A Member described his personal experience of accessing this service and stated that the service he had received had been very positive; and
- What was the criteria used for patients to access the service.

Officers in attendance stated that a risk matrix was used to assess the criteria for accessing the podiatry service, adding that if a person did not meet the criteria they would be signposted to alternative offers. She added that the majority of appointments were delivered in local health centres. Officers also commented that it was the intention to deliver training to staff working in residential and care homes so they could assist individuals with nail cutting.

### **Decision**

To note the report.

### **HSC/24/06      Overview Report**

The report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which contained key decisions within the Committee's remit and responses to previous recommendations was submitted for comment. Members were also invited to agree the Committee's future work programme.

### **Decision**

The Committee notes the report and agrees the work programme.

## **Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 7 December 2023**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Simcock (Chair) – in the Chair

Councillors Andrews, Brickell, Kilpatrick, Kirkpatrick, Lanchbury, Rowles, Stogia and Wheeler

#### **Also present:**

Councillor Rahman, Statutory Deputy Leader

Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Finance and Resources

Councillor White, Executive Member for Housing and Development

**Apologies:** Councillors Connolly, Davies and Evans

#### **RGSC/23/66            Interests**

Councillors Kilpatrick, Lanchbury and Stogia declared personal interests in item 5 – Annual Property Report.

#### **RGSC/23/67            Minutes**

#### **Decision:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

#### **RGSC/23/68            Annual Property Report**

The committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer and the Strategic Director (Growth and Development) which provided an update on property activity since the previous update to the committee in September 2022.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Progress made and initial activity of the Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) including the Asset Review and governance;
- The work of the Council's Development Team and Investment Estate in delivering against the Council's objectives for residential and employment growth;
- A decision not to retender the contract for property management of the Council's investment estate to Jacobs UK Ltd.;
- Significant developments across the city;
- An update on the Council's operational estate, comprised of approximately 350 assets used by the Council to deliver services;

- The work of the Facilities Management service;
- The Zero Carbon Estates Programme;
- The Council's Property Asset Database (CPAD);
- An update on the Our Town Hall project; and
- The use of agency staff.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussions included:

- Welcoming the redevelopment of the Church Street car park, and querying whether the disposal of this meant that the Council would no longer have ownership for this land;
- Highlighting the need for member involvement in the redevelopment of Church Street car park and the importance of retaining the war memorial there;
- If there would be enough car parking in the city centre if the Church Street car park was redeveloped;
- Requesting further information on the Parks Buildings Strategic Group and potential opportunities for buildings in parks;
- The need to understand the implications on the Council's financial position of the return in investment from Manchester Airport;
- Welcoming changing places in parks and the social value work across the property service;
- How much priority was given to maintaining council-owned land;
- What was meant by 'surplus assets';
- How members were involved in the use and purchase of Council-owned land in their wards;
- If the SAMP Board members had the right skills and knowledge in estates management to ensure a maximum return on investments;
- Recognising the Council was awarded Levelling Up funding for Wythenshawe and commending those involved in this;
- Requesting more information on the 1,800 peppercorn leases in the Council's investment portfolio and how these could be viewed on CPAD;
- The vacancy rate amongst council-owned land and properties;
- Whether banks could use surplus space in local libraries across the city;
- Noting that several projects started when interest rates were low, and how viable these schemes were now given the increase in interest rates;
- The quality of early years buildings;
- Whether the Council's website should be amended to reflect that the Town Hall would not reopen in 2024; and
- Why officers were confident in their ability to reduce the requirement for agency staff and to recruit full-time staff.

The Statutory Deputy Leader introduced the report and emphasised the establishment of the SAMP Board, which provided a cohesive and coordinated approach to the Council's estates and developments. He stated that the Council was

trying to address issues around climate change and reducing carbon emissions within the corporate estate.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development stated that the report highlighted the extent of development in the city, with particular reference to affordable housing, district centre investment and other regeneration schemes.

In response to queries regarding Church Street car park, the Assistant Director of Development and Investment Estate explained that a decision on the redevelopment of this site had not yet been made and was subject to an assessment by the SAMP Board but that it was likely to cease being a car park. He explained that a planning brief was being created in consultation with planning officers and noted that heritage was an important assessment factor and that consultation with local members would be undertaken. It was also stated that car parking capacity fell under the remit of the Parking Strategy, which was currently in development and would include a mapping exercise of car parks to understand capacity and utilisation of spaces and to model the impact of redeveloping Church Street car park, which would help to inform the SAMP Board's decision.

The Head of Corporate Estate and Facilities explained that the Parks Buildings Strategic Group was established by the Parks service to ensure that the Council's property function could support the delivery of the Parks Strategy. The estates service provided support in the form of investments, carbon works and occupation agreements, for example.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer committed to providing a report on the Council's investment in Manchester Airport under a Part B session and stated that she could not speculate on future dividend income or distributable returns.

The committee was advised that a thorough, long-term piece of work was underway to identify the current conditions of all Council-owned land. Work was also underway with colleagues in Neighbourhoods where a different approach to clearing land was needed and it was anticipated that new arrangements would be in place at the committee's next annual update. The Statutory Deputy Leader stated that the SAMP Board allowed for a more cohesive approach to centralise work with one point of contact responsible for maintaining pieces of land. Members were also informed that the 2024/25 budget proposals included a small amount of investment for reactive works such as addressing flytipping and clearing land to tackle barriers to completing work where land was owned by an organisation other than the Council.

It was clarified that the term 'surplus' was meant in regard to operational requirements and sites which could be reviewed for alternative use.

The Assistant Director of Development and Investment Estate explained that the Estates service had recently been successful in employing staff with new skillsets and a commercial focus in the last 12 months to recognise the wider remit of the



service. Specific expertise would be commissioned externally where required but the Assistant Director of Development and Investment Estate remained confident in the skillset and commercial awareness within the service.

In response to a query regarding member involvement in the use and purchase of Council-owned land in their wards, it was explained that there was a two-stage process which involved surveyors identifying assets in consultation with colleagues in Growth and Development to determine an appropriate set of future options for a site, such as redevelopment, reinvestment, or refurbishment. These options were then considered by the SAMP Board to provide more detail and a financial appraisal at which point members would be formally engaged with. The Statutory Deputy Leader also confirmed that three Executive Members were appointed to the SAMP Board and reiterated a commitment to ensuring meaningful and timely consultation with members.

The Statutory Deputy Leader offered to provide a report on peppercorn leases and the Head of Corporate Estate and Facilities endeavoured to write to Councillor Andrews with further information on training and how to access CPAD.

The committee was informed that the vacancy rate of the Council's estate and properties was not reported by square meterage or percentage, although it was acknowledged as being possible. The Head of Corporate Estate and Facilities noted that the SAMP Board was being used to review the vacant property list and to ensure that those assets were being considered for use. Use of space in libraries or community centres was actively encouraged and there was an example of a bank delivering services from a local library in Longsight.

The Head of Corporate Estate and Facilities stated that the Council had recently committed capital funding investment into the early years estate and that the market had changed significantly since 2010 when it had been hoped that the assets would generate a sufficient profit to reinvest in the buildings. He stated that one tranche of capital activity had been delivered this year with significant improvements made and a second phase would take place in 2024.

In response to a question regarding interest rates, the Director of Development explained that the property estate was a long-term portfolio which enabled strategic mapping and weathering of economic cycles. He stated that the Council had been able to bolster the viability and deliverability of some of the schemes listed in the report by leveraging them as investable propositions and by leveraging GAP funding. He explained that many projects were in receipt of Levelling Up funding and were joint schemes with central government agencies such as Homes England. The Devolution Brownfield Housing Grant was also being used in residential developments.

It was also acknowledged that the error on the Council's website with regards to the Town Hall reopening date had been flagged and that this would be amended.

The Head of Corporate Estate and Facilities stated that there had been a recent recruitment drive, noting the success of the Growth and Development team in attracting surveyors, and that further recruitment for surveyors would take place in the New Year.

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

**RGSC/23/69                      Capital Programme – Impact of Recent Market Changes and Budget Process**

The committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which provided an update on the impact of recent changes in financial and construction markets on the capital programme and an update on the proposed capital budget process for 2024/25. It also highlighted the increased Government and public scrutiny of Council capital programmes and borrowing approaches, following the issuing of several Section 114 notices as a result of poor capital investment decisions.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background to the capital budget update;
- The Council's current balance sheet position, including external debt and capital financing requirement;
- A renewed focus across the local government sector on financial sustainability;
- The current approved Capital Programme and its capacity;
- How the Programme was being financed; and
- The proposed financing and budget approaches.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussions included:

- If the increased scrutiny of local authorities was driven by the publication of Section 114 notices by some local councils;
- The support provided by the Office for Local Government (OFLOG);
- The probability of having to end capital programme projects and how this is monitored;
- How the drawdown of reserves and being cautious would impact the CRF and future capital investment;
- Whether the current forecast for the approved capital programme table would be updated to reflect budget increases for the Town Hall refurbishment and any other programme; and

- The approach to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and how this would sustain unforeseen increases in borrowing.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer introduced the report and highlighted the increased scrutiny of local authorities' borrowing activity and that this would be looked at in more detail following the establishment of OFLOG. She also assured the committee that work was underway on the shape of the capital programme for the next 5 years and how this would balance investment in infrastructure, external funding and the scope for new investment priorities.

In response to a query from the Chair, the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer stated that the increased scrutiny of local government recognised concerns over the high levels of borrowing and Joint Ventures in some local authorities which did not necessarily have the resources or expertise to correctly manage risk.

The committee was advised that OFLOG was still developing their approach and capacity to provide support, but it would try to encourage a culture of early intervention to identify warning signs and signpost authorities to expertise and support. OFLOG would identify a suite of metrics, such as levels of borrowing, to highlight areas for further discussion.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer stated that the Council would only take on new borrowing if it was clear and strategically aligned to a Council priority and an invest-to-save approach was currently being assessed. She provided assurances that none of the capital programme projects would be cancelled currently as all schemes were affordable and officers continued to review the capital programme.

It was stated that the relationship between reserves and borrowing was two-fold, and that the capital financing requirement remained the same irrespective of internal borrowing against reserves. It was recognised that significant additional borrowing was required for programmes such as the Town Hall refurbishment and provision within reserves to cover this had been ensured. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer acknowledged that additional borrowing would need to result in additional increases in the capital financing budget.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer explained that the 2022/23 capital programme was continuously changing and updated on a quarterly basis when new schemes were added. She noted that projections also changed and that the most up-to-date forecast would include the latest approved funding increases.

Members were also informed that the MRP was in lieu of accounting for depreciation or repayment of principle in the same way as the private sector. The Commercial Finance Lead explained that, under the CIPFA Financial Management Code, the Council had to repay debt through revenue budget. He stated that the use of

reserves did not impact the capital financing requirement but resulted in the Council incurring extra borrowing costs as this externalised debt which had been previously internalised through using reserves and not keeping these cash backed. He explained that quarterly reviews of the capital and revenue budgets modelled the use of reserves and what this meant for the Council's balance sheet, levels of reserves and required borrowing to assess whether the capital financing budget was sufficient.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources stated that Manchester was an aspirational and growing city with an important pipeline of schemes in the capital programme. He recognised that the construction market had experienced inflation at levels which had not been seen in decades and stated that the government under Liz Truss had caused a spike in interest rates, rising mortgage costs and impacted the council's capacity for borrowing.

### **Decision:**

That the report be noted.

### **RGSC/23/69                      Autumn Statement - Budget Impact**

The committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which highlighted the announcements from the Government's Autumn Statement which have a direct implication for local government funding next year and future years.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt MP, delivered the Government's Autumn Statement (mini budget) to the House of Commons on 22 November 2023 and this was structured around reducing debt; cutting tax and rewarding hard work; and backing British business;
- The Autumn Statement and main Spring Budget announcements do not provide exact funding updates for Local Government, but provide important indicators as to the outlook for council funding and allow this information to be used to inform the medium-term financial plan and budget process;
- Further detail on the Local Government position was expected in early December when a policy document will be released by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), and in late December when the provisional settlement with LA allocations would be published;
- The economic and fiscal forecasts published by the Office for Budget Responsibility alongside the Autumn Statement;
- There would be no increase in the overall funding envelope over the Spending Review period and no additional funding was announced for local authorities beyond the increases already expected;
- Announcements indirectly affecting residents included a rise in National Living Wage; the unfreezing of Local Housing Allowance (LHA); a rise in benefits;

protection of the pensions 'triple-lock'; a decrease in the rate of National Insurance; and changes to national insurance for self-employed people;

- The continuation of business rates retention arrangements for Greater Manchester under the Devolution Trailblazer;
- Medium-term implications; and
- The provisional settlement outcome and revised position will be reported to the committee and the Executive in January to consider the longer-term position.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussion included:

- Whether it had been confirmed that the Household Support Fund (HSF) would not continue in 2024/25;
- If HSF funded free school meals and the Holiday Activity Fund scheme, and how these schemes would be funded if HSF ended;
- Noting that the Council received £12.9m in HSF, and querying whether any representations had been made to government to ask that this be continued;
- Noting the rise in National Living Wage in April 2024, and querying whether this increase would be implemented regardless of any other staff pay deal;
- Noting the importance of communicating any changes in Local Housing Allowance and the relevant Universal Credit aspect of housing support;
- The possibility of there being a period where employees would need to receive a pay uplift to meet the Real Living Wage whilst an agreed pay award was being implemented; and
- Most residents in Manchester would not feel the benefit of tax cuts set out in the Autumn Statement due to the freezing of the income tax threshold and the cost-of-living crisis.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources stated that the Chancellor's Autumn Statement made no reference to local government and failed to recognise the cumulative effect that budget cuts have had on council finances. He stated that the Council was not anticipating an uplift in funding in the next spending review period, but the government had indicated that a robust and resilient Local Government Finance Settlement would be provided in December. He informed the committee that there had been no decision on the continuation of the Household Support Fund (HSF) and that there would be no additional funding for the Homeless Prevention Grant. He also expressed his belief that a change of government was needed.

In response to queries regarding HSF, the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer stated that figures in a previously published document showed that funding would end. However, a parliamentary question was asked after the Autumn Statement about future provision of HSF, and it was stated that this would continue into the next year but it was still being reviewed by government. It was further explained that c. £6.7m of HSF was used to fund free school meals during school

holidays and that most of the Holiday Activity Fund was funded separately with a top-up contribution from the Council to enable this to run during half-term holidays as well as the summer holidays. The remainder of HSF funds were used for support payments to residents who were eligible and to carers.

It was clarified that HSF would run to the end of the current financial year and, whilst the loss of this funding could not be mitigated, officers were looking at how best to use all funding.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the committee would receive a report in January 2024 on welfare support funding provided by the Council and how this could be best used. A member requested that this report include information on any changes to Local Housing Allowance rates, whether this would affect the eligibility criteria for Council Tax Support and if it would increase the workload of the Council's Revenue and Benefits Unit.

In response to queries regarding the National Living Wage, the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer explained that employers were obliged to pay the National Minimum Wage and the Council was committed to paying the Real Living Wage, which would be factored into discussions with providers around funding. She stated that these discussions were separate to any pay-negotiating bodies which looked at broader pay settlements across the public sector.

Members were informed that the process of managing local authority pay and the impacts of this were complex and it was difficult to undertake a differential pay award increase. The Executive Member for Finance and Resources echoed members' points but emphasised the need to be thorough in pay negotiations and to come to a mutually agreeable resolution.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources echoed a comment made that Most residents in Manchester would not feel the benefit of tax cuts set out in the Autumn Statement.

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

**RGSC/23/70                    Housing Revenue Account 2024/25 to 2026/27**

The committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) and the Strategic Director (Growth and Development) which presented an update on the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2024/25 and set out the key assumptions being used in developing the next year's budget and the outlook for the 30-year HRA business plan in light of the budget proposals.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- The proposed rent increase for 2024/25 was 7.7%;
- The current budget position for the HRA as at period 6, with a forecasted overspend of £2.879m;
- The current budget assumptions for 2023/24, including rental income;
- There was no indication in the government's recent Autumn Statement that a rent cap would be applied as it had for 2023/24;
- Management of housing stock and property numbers;
- Other income and Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes;
- Communal heating and a proposal to increase the tariffs to residents in line with the price cap as set by Ofgem from 1 January 2024 which would be reviewed in April 2024 when the next price cap announcement was due;
- Debt financing and borrowing costs;
- Capital investment;
- The overall reserves position forecast; and
- Recognising the difficulties faced by tenants in light of the current cost of living crisis, whilst seeking to balance the need to have a balanced HRA business plan.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussions included:

- If consideration had been given to lengthening the business plan to 35 or 40 years, as a result of increased interest rates;
- Whether a rent increase cap would be implemented for 2024/25 as it had been for the current year and, if so, how this would affect the HRA budget;
- Whether planning changes announced in the Autumn Statement would impact retrofitting and the installation of heat pumps;
- Challenges with access to properties and how this affected the project repairs percentage;
- How future risk and changes, such as in fire safety measures, were factored into the business plan;
- The assessment undertaken in the decision not to bring the housing repairs contact in-house;
- Welcoming the reduction in the number of void properties;
- The cap on the number of properties the Council could purchase;
- If Private Finance Initiative (PFI) housing stock was subject to Right-to-Buy, and whether this was excluded from current assumptions of the Council's future housing stock;
- Whether there would be any communication with residents in communal heating schemes about proposed increases to tariffs in line with the price cap as set by Ofgem from 1st January 2024;
- Whether any consideration had been given to moving to individual heating schemes, as opposed to communal schemes, to give residents more control over their usage and bills; and

- If there were any issues with non-payment of communal heating charges.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development introduced the item and explained that the HRA was a ringfenced account for the Council's housing services and the report outlined the long-term 30-year business plan and the immediate budget and rent-setting decisions. He stated that there was an ongoing commitment to housing retrofit, fire safety, tackling damp and mould and capital investment to improve housing stock across the city.

In response to queries, the Head of Finance (Corporate Core and Strategic Development) explained that the business plan was a rolling plan with the 30-year timeframe set as part of the financing, but it did look beyond 30 years in reality.

The Director of Housing Services advised that the government would consult on rent policy from 2025 and changes to the current arrangements were not expected before then. He also acknowledged challenges with gaining access to properties to undertake necessary repairs and this differed between schemes and jobs but that this impacted around 10-15% of repairs. He also advised that there were different powers for repairs relating to health and safety and gas. Members were informed that this was a key feature of resident bulletins and the Executive Member for Housing and Development stated that the Housing Advisory Board had recently discussed this. He noted that the Council's responsibility was to communicate appropriately and in a coherent way to engage with residents on the importance of providing access where necessary.

In response to a query regarding heat pumps, the Executive Member for Housing and Development explained that the recently announced changes to planning policy would provide a greater degree of flexibility regarding where air source heat pumps were sited. He noted that there was a wider issue around opportunities to work with residents to transition homes to more efficient heat sources.

The Head of Finance (Corporate Core and Strategic Development) stated that the business plan included long-term assumptions and that there was a programme of short- and medium-term assumptions. He advised that there was a projected estimate of £23m which covered the business plan for certain amount of time, but work was ongoing in Housing Services to commission an asset management plan to provide condition surveys and would help to create an estimate of cost requirements for the future and whether the projected £23m was sufficient.

The Director of Housing Services explained that the Major Contracts Oversight Board would consider the delivery model assessment for the Council's housing repairs and maintenance contract in December. This assessed the current market and opportunities to recommission, but the Director of Housing Services acknowledged a motion passed previously by the Council to insource contracts.



In response to a question regarding the cap on the number of properties the Council could purchase, the Head of Finance (Corporate Core and Strategic Development) informed members that this was introduced in the 2022/23 financial year and aimed to encourage increased supply within the housing market through new building as opposed to acquiring existing homes. He stated that the cap would be phased in over a number of years and amounted to 50% of the Council's capital receipts for properties sold under Right-to-Buy in 2022/23 and would reduce to 30% over time.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development highlighted that the HRA 30-year business plan was predicated on the ability for housing stock to grow. He expressed his vision to bolster the HRA through increased Council-owned housing stock and cited developments in Collyhurst and Silk Street as examples of this.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development also confirmed that Right-to-Buy did apply to PFI properties.

Regarding questions around communal heating schemes, the Executive Member for Housing and Development reiterated a member's comment on the importance of communicating any tariff changes. He noted that around 2000 tenants were part of a communal heating scheme and stated that any communications would signpost any resident who might struggle financially as a result of the increase to the Community Living Fund. This Fund amounted to £1m this year and it was hoped that this would be repeated in 2024/25 to support those most in need.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development stated that individual heating schemes was being reviewed through capital funding to ensure that the Council's housing stock was energy efficient and had appropriate heating arrangements. He reiterated work to implement ground source heat pumps and other measures across Council housing in the city.

In concluding the item, the Executive Member for Housing and Development welcomed the committee's comments and advised that rent-setting for Council-owned properties would be included in the budget process in February 2024.

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

**RGSC/23/71                      Setting of the Council Tax Base and Business Rates Shares  
for Budget Setting Purposes**

The committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which advised on the methodology of calculating the council tax base and business rates income for budget setting purposes for 2024/25 and detailed the timing of related payments and the decision on business rates pool membership.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- The Council has a statutory duty to agree the 2023/24 estimated council tax surplus or deficit by 15 January 2024; set the 2024/25 council tax base by the 31 January 2024; agree the 2023/24 estimated business rates surplus or deficit by 31 January 2024; and set the 2024/25 business rates base by the 31 January 2024;
- The calculation of the council tax base is the number of dwellings within the Council's boundary presented as 'Band D equivalent';
- Under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, from 1 April 2024 authorities can apply a 100% premium on unoccupied, empty and unfurnished properties after one year. This will be included in the 2024/25 tax base calculation and is estimated to generate an additional £0.8m;
- Retained business rates income remains protected and all Greater Manchester authorities, under the 100% Trailblazer Deal, are guaranteed 97.0% of their baseline funding level; and
- Requesting that the Chair of Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee approves the exemption of various related Key Decisions from the call-in process.

**Decision:**

That the committee

1. notes that the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Resources, has delegated powers to:
  - agree the estimated council tax surplus or deficit for 2023/24;
  - set the 2024/25 council tax base for tax setting purposes in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2013;
  - agree the estimated business rates surplus or deficit for 2023/24;
  - calculate the 2024/25 business rates income for budget setting purposes in accordance with the Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations;
  - determine whether the Council should be part of a business rate pooling arrangements with other Greater Manchester local authorities in 2024/25;
  - set the dates of precept payments to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in 2024/25.
2. notes that the Chair of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee will be requested to exempt various key decisions from the call-in procedure.

The committee received a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which provided details of key decisions that fell within the Committee's remit and items for information previously requested by the Committee. The report also included the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to amend as appropriate and agree.

A query was raised regarding an outstanding recommendation that a more substantial report on Major Contracts be provided at the next update and that this included an appendix with more detailed information on each major contract and whether insourcing would be viable. Officers endeavoured to bring a report on this in March 2024.

**Decision:**

That

1. the report be noted, and
2. the work programme agreed with an update report on major contracts considered by the committee in March 2024.

## **Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 11 January 2024**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Simcock (Chair) – in the Chair

Councillors Andrews, Connolly, Davies, Evans, Kilpatrick, Kirkpatrick, Lanchbury, Rowles and Wheeler

#### **Also present:**

Councillor Midgley, Deputy Leader

Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Finance and Resources

Councillor White, Executive Member for Housing and Development

Richard Dunbar, Debt Justice

Alison Aitken, ACORN

**Apologies:** Councillors Brickell and Stogia

#### **RGSC/24/1            Interests**

Councillor Connolly declared a personal interest in item 14 – Commercial Activity, Investments and Governance (Part B).

#### **RGSC/24/2            Minutes**

In approving the minutes, a member requested further information on the number of council-owned properties which were undergoing work or refurbishment and not officially classed as empty.

It was also clarified under minute RGSC/23/70 that a member had highlighted that there would be a discrepancy between the Real Living Wage and the National Living Wage once the latter was increased in April 2024 and that the Council needed to explore this in order to retain its accreditation as a Real Living Wage employer.

#### **Decision:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2023 be approved as a correct record and that the clarification above be noted.

#### **RGSC/24/3            Increasing Council Tax Premiums on Empty Properties**

The committee considered a report of the Head of Corporate Revenues which provided an overview of and update on new powers provided by legislation to increase the Council Tax on empty properties.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- New powers under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 stipulated that:
  - Empty, unfurnished properties would pay the 100% long term empty premium after one year instead of two years from 1 April 2024.
  - Empty, furnished properties would pay up to a 100% premium from the date that they became empty from 1 April 2025.
- Consultation on these proposals was undertaken as part of the 2023 budget consultation;
- The financial implications of applying the premium;
- Safeguards in place, such as the Discretionary Council Tax Payment scheme; and
- A further report would be brought to Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee and Executive in advance of introducing the new policy for empty and furnished properties from 1 April 2025.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussions included:

- If the Council collected council tax on properties that were empty whilst under probate and, if so, whether any discretion could be applied in such circumstances;
- Whether modelling had been undertaken of the anticipated savings as a result of increasing the premium; and
- How the new powers would drive behaviour change from owners of empty properties.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources introduced the report and explained that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 had been delayed and was passed in late October 2023. He stated that the increased premiums would bring in much-needed revenue for Manchester and that it enabled the Council to encourage homeowners to bring empty properties onto the market much sooner which would help to address the challenge of the housing crisis.

The Head of Corporate Revenues advised the committee that the changes would hopefully lead to behavioural change from owners of empty properties and explained that these premiums did not apply to empty properties of Registered Social Landlords. He also explained that guidelines were expected from the government which could inform the approach to empty properties which were for sale and rental properties vacant between tenancies. The committee was also informed that the New Homes Bonus applied to each empty, unfurnished property that was brought back onto the market.

In response to members' queries regarding empty properties under probate, the Head of Corporate Revenues advised that there were specific rules in these circumstances and that these tended to be exempt from the premium until probate

was awarded. Further information on this would be shared with members following the meeting.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer reiterated the importance of behaviour change as a result of the increased premium and the number of empty properties brought back into use would be monitored.

The Head of Corporate Revenues clarified that a behaviour change would involve empty property owners reletting properties and reducing the small number of 'phantom tenancies'.

### **Decision:**

That the committee endorse the recommendations to the Executive.

## **RGSC/24/4                      Anti-Poverty Budget Options**

The committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which identified the current budgets and support that the Council provided in delivering its Anti-Poverty measures, offered options for future Anti-Poverty provision and provided a suggested framework for describing ongoing Anti-Poverty provision and expected outcomes.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background to anti-poverty support measures;
- The work of Making Manchester Fairer and the Anti-Poverty Strategy;
- Anti-poverty budgets for 2023/24;
- Measures such as Council Tax Support, the Household Support Fund (HSF) and the Residents at Risk Cost of Living Group;
- Framework and options for 2024/25;
- Recommendations for the anti-poverty budget allocation; and
- The range of households supported by HSF and the projected spend at 31 March 2024.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussions included:

- Noting the likely end of HSF and the importance of communicating this to residents in a timely manner;
- When an announcement on Local Housing Allowance was expected;
- Querying the £968k underspend in the Cost-of-Living budget for 2023/24 and why residents were not presenting for support when needed;
- Whether more work was needed with sector organisations to promote the Discretionary Council Tax Support Payment scheme; and

- Whether targeted support could be provided to those in receipt of free school meals and the holiday activities programme in the event that HSF did not continue.

The Deputy Leader introduced the report and explained that it highlighted the Council's current anti-poverty spending and options for the future. She stated that this was a complex area and thanked officers for their work. She recognised that the cost-of-living crisis was ongoing and that residents were still feeling the impacts of this, with the Council prioritising support for residents whilst facing its own budgetary pressures. She expressed her concern that the government had not provided any indication that HSF would continue after March 2024, noting that this fund was vital to residents and in funding the Council's free school meals and holiday activities programme.

The Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services echoed concerns over the end of HSF and explained that 50% of the HSF budget was maintained for free school meal provisions in school holidays. He informed the committee that the Council would face a reduction of around £4.9m in resources if HSF was discontinued.

In response to members' points and queries on HSF, the Executive Member for Finance and Resources stated that the Leader of the Council was working with the Local Government Association (LGA) on this, and that Manchester MPs were going to table an item in Parliament to encourage the continuation of support. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer recognised the significant impact of the discontinuation of HSF and stated that officers had begun to look at budget options in the event that HSF was continued.

The Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services emphasised that officers had started to model the impact of receiving a similar or reduced level of HSF and that they would continue to work closely with colleagues in the Communications team to inform residents of the support available.

The Head of Corporate Assessments informed the committee that indicative figures on the Local Housing Allowance had been received that week which suggested substantial increases. He stated that this was encouraging and had been welcomed by the Homelessness service as a move in the right direction. He noted that there would remain a gap between the LHA and rent prices but stated that the rise would moderate demand for Discretionary Housing Payments.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer explained that indicative LHA rates had increased to the thirtieth percentile of market rent prices and that further information would be shared when available.

The Head of Corporate Assessments explained that a lot of work had been undertaken in the previous 12 months to ensure an effective focus on the private

rented sector. He explained that there had been an increase in demand for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) within the social landlord and private rented sectors over a number of years. He stated that DHP was designed to provide short-term support for residents and that the Council sought to be creative in finding ways to maximise support. He recognised that communications would not reach every resident but that there was clear communication about the scheme. The committee was informed that the move to Universal Credit provided an added complexity, and it was recognised that more work was needed, particularly with colleagues in Neighbourhoods to raise awareness of the support available.

It was also acknowledged that communications about Discretionary Council Tax Payments would need to be shared imminently.

In response to a query regarding the possibility of providing targeted support to those in receipt of free school meals and the holiday activities programme, the Head of Corporate Assessments advised that the free school meals programme included a significant number of children and that providing targeted individual support would result in small payments that would have minimal impact. He emphasised that there were a number of support schemes available to those presenting in need, such as the Welfare Provision Fund and Section 17 payments. The committee was also advised that the Council would continue to provide free school meals during the Easter 2024 holiday because of when it fell in the calendar year.

Members were informed that any additional funding would be announced on 6 March 2024 in the Chancellor's next financial statement.

In summarising, the Executive Member thanked officers for their work, particularly those who delivered the HSF programmes, and the Chair echoed these sentiments on behalf of the committee.

#### **Decision:**

That the report be noted.

#### **RGSC/24/5                      Changes to Council Tax Support Scheme from April 2024**

The committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which proposed changes to the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme for Executive approval.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- The proposed change would mean that the Council Tax Support Scheme would pay up to 85% of the Council Tax bill leaving 15% to pay, compared to the current scheme of which paid up to 82.5% of the Council Tax bill leaving 17.5% to pay;



- It was also proposed to extend the CTS backdating period for working-age claims from 6 months to 12 months;
- A background to council tax in Manchester, including current and previous schemes;
- Costs of the proposed changes; and
- The approach, content and outcome of the consultation with precepting authorities.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussion included:

- Welcoming the proposals and recognising the positive outcomes of the public consultation;
- Whether there was any aspirations to amend the CTSS to pay up to 100% of council tax;
- Whether costs of backdating council tax arrears were factored into the new proposals;
- That CTSS only applied to the Council's portion of council tax and not precepting authorities and whether residents would still benefit; and
- The need for communication to make new Universal Credit claimants aware that they can apply for CTS.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources introduced the report and highlighted that the Council had committed to supporting residents through the cost-of-living crisis. He recognised that, whilst inflation rates were easing, residents continued to feel the impact of this. He explained that extending the backdating period would help to clear more council tax arrears for those facing financial difficulty.

The Head of Corporate Assessments reiterated that the proposals had been subject to a public consultation and an Equality Impact Assessment, which supported the recommendations of the report.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer advised that the service had many aspirations but there was a need to balance affordability. There was a current focus on increasing investment into council tax support whilst protecting measures such as breathing space and debt collection.

With regards the backdating, the Head of Corporate Assessment explained that a review of backdating spend in the previous year had been undertaken but noted that it was difficult to model this with confidence because many cases did not require backdating for a full 12 months. He stated that the biggest benefit would be the ability to respond to cases where a resident had not claimed CTS when it was needed.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer explained that the Council had not modelled the wider impact of CTS as it did not want to pre-empt any preceptor decisions of other authorities, such as Greater Manchester Combined Authority. It was confirmed that the Budget report for consideration in February would include a breakdown of council tax by precept and what this would mean for residents, including those on CTS.

In response to a point about communication, the Head of Corporate Assessments recognised the importance of ensuring that eligible residents received CTS and stated that this would be raised with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) as the first point of contact for Universal Credit claimants.

**Decision:**

That the committee endorses the recommendations to the Executive.

**RGSC/24/6                      Feasibility Study into Ending the Use of Enforcement Agents**

The committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which presented a feasibility study into whether the use of Enforcement Agents (EAs), also known as bailiffs, was an effective or proportionate method of collecting debt, following representations made by ACORN and Debt Justice at the committee's meeting on 7 September 2024.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- The use of EAs remained widespread across the UK, with all of the five most deprived Council areas in England, of which Manchester was one, referring cases to EAs where residents do not engage and all Greater Manchester Councils using EAs to recover Council Tax debt, with two GM authorities having an in-house team for this;
- Improved regulation of the EA industry since 2014;
- Considerable investment and improvements into debt collection practice and engagement with residents;
- Recovery processes prior to an EA visit;
- The importance of Council Tax to the Council;
- Representations from ACORN, with a response from the Council, and Debt Justice;
- Representation from the Civil Enforcement Association (CIVEA) in response to ACORN and Debt Justice;
- Representation from Citizens Advice Manchester; and
- Examples of the revised reminder and recovery letters sent to residents.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussions included:

- Welcoming the recommendations;
- Recognising the impact that losing 1% of council tax had on the Council's overall budget, but also recognising the cost of stress and health concerns arising from an EA visit;
- Acknowledging the dialogue between the Council, ACORN and Debt Justice; and
- If residents were still able to apply for Discretionary Council Tax Payments if they had a case passed to EAs in the past.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources introduced the report and explained that the use of EAs was a last resort. He stated that the report highlighted the Council's work over the last 18 years to ensure a reduction in the number of cases passed onto EAs and that the feasibility study had provided an opportunity to learn the experiences of other authorities and to examine the code of conduct for EAs. He thanked the organisations that provided representations and stated that council tax amounted to 30% of the Council's revenue budget and funded key services such as Children's and Adults Social Care. He stated that a 1% reduction in the amount of council tax collected would equate to a loss of £2.73m in revenue, which the Council could not afford against a backdrop of government budget cuts.

The Chair acknowledged the cooperation of ACORN, Debt Justice and Citizens' Advice in the preparation of the report and stated that their contributions had influenced the Council's approach to the collection of Council Tax, for example, in the rewording of the various letters that were sent to residents where Council Tax was overdue.

The Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services echoed thanks to ACORN and Debt Justice and stated that reducing the number of cases passed to EAs was a key priority and achievement of the service. He highlighted policy changes and work to encourage residents to contact the Council as soon as possible if they struggled to pay their council tax. This included writing off costs for those who engaged with the Council, creating longer payment arrangements, allowing breathing space for arrears payment and the Discretionary Council Tax Payment scheme.

The Chair invited Richard Dunbar of Debt Justice to address the committee. Richard advised that his organisation welcomed the recommendation before the committee and acknowledged the financial challenges facing local authorities like Manchester. However, he stated that the knock-on effect of receiving a visit from an enforcement agent equated to costs of £6m to mental health services. He stated that the Ministry of Justice planned to increase enforcement fees by 5% which he believed would create a commercial incentive for EAs to collect debt to the detriment of residents. He called on the committee to amend the motion before them to recommend that it was not appropriate for any case where the resident was eligible for any level CTS to

be referred to EAs and agrees that recovery via an attachment of benefits is more appropriate, including for those currently in receipt of maximum CTS.

The Chair sought officers' views on the suggested recommendation. The Head of Corporate Revenues stated that he was largely in agreement with the amendment but that it would need to be looked at in more detail. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer concurred with this and stated that a final approval could be sought through the budget-setting.

The committee also received a verbal representation from Alison Aitken of ACORN.

In response to a comment regarding the lateness of the report, the City Solicitor agreed that it was important for reports to be received promptly and she advised that this report was being finalised up until the point of publication. The Executive Member for Finance and Resources highlighted that late reports were not out of the ordinary and that this report had been impacted by the lateness of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, which meant that additional work was required to ensure the figures in the report were accurate.

Confirmation was also provided that a person was still able to apply for Discretionary Council Tax Payments if they had a case passed to EAs against them in the past.

The Head of Corporate Revenues emphasised the need for residents who may be struggling to pay to engage with the Council, who could signpost to any available support. He stated that leaflets had been created to promote this and were available for members of the committee to take away and share with their communities.

The committee was also advised that the Council monitored complaints about EAs closely and a mapping exercise of enforcement agents' behaviour against the Council's code of practice had been implemented. The Head of Corporate Revenues also asked ACORN to encourage their members to report any instances of poor conduct amongst EAs as this would drive improvement.

In response to comments regarding rising enforcement fees, members were informed that fees were to be increased for the first time since 2014.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer welcomed the ongoing dialogue with ACORN and Debt Justice and expressed her thanks to officers for their valuable work. She emphasised the importance of revenue generated through council tax and highlighted that some of those refusing to pay council tax could afford to do so.

The Chair stated the recommendation before the Committee was to continue with the use of EAs, which he felt only fair to the vast majority of Manchester residents who paid their Council Tax bills without the need for any enforcement. He highlighted that the Council's use of enforcement agents had reduced significantly over the last few years and that there was extensive support available for those least able to pay.

He also stated that EAs mainly focused on those residents who simply refused to engage in any discussion regarding payment of their Council Tax, which included a significant number of residents on salaries in excess of £40k per annum.

### **Decision:**

That the committee

1. notes the contents of the report and thanks ACORN, Debt Justice and Citizens Advice Manchester (CAM) for their challenge and contributions;
2. notes 1% drop in the in-year collection rate of Council Tax represents a reduction of £2.73 million in the Council's revenue;
3. recommends that the City Council continues to use EAs in the collection of Council Tax against individual residents;
4. recommends that it is not appropriate for any case where the resident is eligible for CTS to be referred to EAs and agrees that recovery via an attachment of benefits is more appropriate, including for those currently in receipt of maximum CTS;
5. recommends that further consideration is given to implementing the recommendations made by CAM;
6. That the Council continues to review its use of Enforcement Agents in the recovery of Council Tax debt and monitors any other solutions employed by other authorities
7. That the Council continues to participate in any consultation undertaken with regards to the regulations governing Council Tax

### **RGSC/24/7                      Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25 and Budget Assumptions**

The committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which provided an update on the main announcements from the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24 which was announced on 18 December 2023.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background to the Finance Settlement;
- Manchester's Core Spending Power (CSP) would increase by £41million;
- Changes to business rates, including the introduction of a standard business rating multiplier;
- Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief and the New Homes Bonus would continue for a further year;
- Social Care grants were largely in line with expectations;
- The Services Grant had been cut by 84%;
- Implications of these announcements on the Council's budget; and
- Next steps and conclusions.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources introduced the item and explained that the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was received late and worse than the Council had anticipated. He stated that the potential budget gap for 2024/25 had increased to c. £5million, compared to a £1.6m gap which was previously expected. He noted that in-year pressures, particularly around Adult Social Care, meant that the Council was increasingly reliant on the use of reserves. He highlighted that the Provisional Finance Settlement allocated some extra monies for adult social care and public health but that this did not go far enough to compensate for the reduction of the Service Grant.

He recognised that several local authorities in England had served Section 114 notices and stated that the Local Government Association was monitoring other authorities at risk of this due to pressures felt by councils nationally and in the context of 14 years of government-imposed austerity. He stated that the Council would continue to lobby government and identify the most efficient way to maximise resources and he expressed his desire for a change in government.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer reiterated the disappointing outcome of the Settlement but stated that officers were focused on next steps in the budget process. She advised that some funding rebates were expected from GMCA and work was ongoing to identify ways to close the budget gap. She expressed her confidence that a balanced budget for 2024/25 would be proposed for consideration by the committee in February.

In discussing the item, a member highlighted the cumulative budget cuts to the Council since the beginning of austerity measures and the impact of this.

**Decision:**

That the committee endorses the recommendations to the Executive.

**RGSC/24/8                      Sales, Fees and Charges – Budget 2024/25**

The committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which provided an update on the current work being undertaken to review all sales, fees and charges as part of the 2024/25 budget process to ensure that charges were correct, that the costs of providing the services were recovered, and to identify opportunities for increasing existing budgets in order to support the overall Council 2024/25 budget.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Providing an overview of sales, fees and charges in the current financial year;
- The review process and proposed price increases for 2024/25 by service;

- £1m of additional income budgets as a result of this exercise would contribute to achieving a balanced budget; and
- Future opportunities and risks.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussions included:

- Noting that some charges, particularly in bereavement services, were to be confirmed but should not be increased significantly;
- Charges to residents who sell a property of which the Council was the freeholder;
- Suggesting that the £0.674m shortfall from off street car park charges should not be marked as green in the RAG rating in the budget papers; and
- The waste and pest control fees, which were still to be agreed, and whether these would be increased by 5%.

The Deputy City Treasurer explained that the report aimed to provide greater transparency and visibility of the Council's sales, fees and charges. He stated that these fees were increased to support service delivery and this was important given the financial pressures facing the authority.

The Head of Finance (Corporate Core, Neighbourhoods, Growth and Development) explained that a review of sales, fees and charges formed part of the overall budget-setting process and highlighted that income generation could be variable and impacted by factors outside of the Council's control. He stated that the review had assessed the Council's income budget in addition to existing prices and activity levels and tried to identify future prices against a backdrop of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. He advised that work was ongoing in some services to assess the impact of fee increases and that this would form part of the final budget proposals for consideration in February.

In response to members' queries, the Head of Finance (Corporate Core, Neighbourhoods, Growth and Development) reiterated that work on fee increases for bereavement services was ongoing and that the service was assessing the implications of activity levels and demand in addition to prices. This would be confirmed in the budget paper in February.

The Head of Finance (Corporate Core, Neighbourhoods, Growth and Development) confirmed that charges for buying a freehold from the Council were included under the wider investment estate. He stated that the Growth and Development directorate had a wider Estates service with a wide-reaching remit over building leases, rentals, assets and freehold payments. The Strategic Lead (Development) explained that these payments related to consent or fees for profession work and no income was derived from the sale of a property.

In response to a comment about the RAG rating for car park underspends, the Deputy City Treasurer acknowledged this and explained that car park usage had increased in recent months despite changes in working habits.

The Head of Finance (Corporate Core, Neighbourhoods, Growth and Development) confirmed that a decision was still to be made on waste and pest control fees but this would be increased up to a maximum of 5%.

The committee was also advised that, going forwards, a detailed report on sales, fees and charges would be provided on annual basis as part of the budget-setting process, which members welcomed.

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

**RGSC/24/9                      Overview Report**

The committee received a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which provided details of key decisions that fell within the Committee's remit and items for information previously requested by the Committee. The report also included the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to amend as appropriate and agree.

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

**RGSC/24/10                      Commercial Activity, Investments and Governance (Part A)**

The committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which provided an overview of the governance and assurance activity which took place before, during and post completion of the Council's commercial transactions.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background to the Council's commercial activity;
- The work of the Commercial Board, including directorship training and the Due Diligence Framework;
- The regulation of commercial activity;
- Public Interest and Best Value Reports; and
- Risk management.

The Head of Commercial Governance, Assurance and Initiatives stated that commercial governance was more important than ever given the budgetary and regulatory context that local authorities were operating in. She stated that



Manchester City Council had established a robust, transparent and accountable structure to ensure appropriate oversight, monitoring and reporting of its commercial portfolio.

In response to a member's query regarding reported high energy costs facing the Council, the Head of Commercial Governance, Assurance and Initiatives explained that steps had recently been taken to provide security through green energy and budgetary benefits through the Power Purchase Agreement, which was approved by Executive in December 2023. She also confirmed that a full response had been provided to Manchester Evening News' enquiry about high energy costs.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer explained that figures on energy costs initially included VAT which had been claimed back. She highlighted that the Council had retendered its energy contracts at the start of the war in Ukraine and that the budget proposals showed significant savings as a result of the retendered electricity contract and the gas contracts would be in a similar position soon.

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

**RGSC/24/11                      Exclusion of Press and Public**

**Decision:**

That the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item which involved consideration of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of particular persons and public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

**RGSC/24/12                      Commercial Activity, Investments and Governance (Part B)**

The committee considered a confidential report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which provided further detail to the Part A report on the Council's commercial activities, including, but not limited to, provision of loans to third parties, Joint Ventures, investments into a range of initiatives and property transactions.

The committee discussed the structure, financing, and terms of these arrangements. As part of these discussions, a further report on Manchester Life was requested and officers endeavoured to bring this to the committee in the new municipal year.

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

# **Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2023**

### **Present:**

Councillor Shilton Godwin – in the Chair

Councillors Chohan, Collins, Holt, Ilyas, McCaul, Razaq, Wiest and Wright

### **Also present:**

Councillor Rawlins, Executive Member for Environment and Transport

Councillor Foley, Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Transport

Councillor Igbon, Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods

Councillor Ahmed Ali, Deputy Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods

Councillor Simcock, Chair of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Kilpatrick, Member of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

Samantha Nicholson, Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency

## **ECCNSC/23/65      Minutes**

### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 9 November 2023 as a correct record.

## **ECCNSC/23/66      Climate Change Communications**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Strategic Communications that provided an update on the Council's Climate Change Communications approach and supporting activity.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background, noting the four-pronged approach to climate change communications and engagement activity;
- Reporting that the communications team worked with members of the Zero Carbon Coordination Group (ZCCG) and workstream members to communicate climate change messages on a regular and ongoing basis;
- An update on behavioural change campaigns;
- Discussion on the approach to evaluating climate change communications;
- Climate change research and key findings; and
- Citywide climate change campaign.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- How had the participants of the focus groups referred to in the report been selected, and was socio-economic background taken into consideration;
- Welcoming and supporting the identification of 'a call for action' as a key finding of the focus groups;

- The importance of promotion of Council activities on the issue of climate change;
- Welcoming the development of the communications group and the range of partners involved in this work, and requesting that future update reports include discussion of this work;
- Were communication campaigns delivered in different languages;
- The need to acknowledge and reflect consideration of the impact of the cost of living crisis across all communications campaigns; and
- The importance of utilising social media to maximise and extend the reach of campaigns and awareness on the issue of climate change.

The Head of Strategic Communications said that the focus groups were drawn upon from participants from survey work that had been undertaken with people being invited to participate. He said that communications campaigns were tailored and targeted to be the most appropriate for the intended audience. He commented that consideration was given to utilising other campaigns to reiterate the climate change message and promote relevant activities and events. He said that communications were not routinely translated, however when appropriate to do so they would be and using trusted community networks assisted in the delivery of information and advice. He acknowledged the comments made regarding the cost of living crisis and said that it was never the intention to shame people into action but rather to support and promote viable actions, such as the price cap on bus fares as part of the wider promotion of the Bee Network.

The Chair commented that within the report it referred to a detailed report on the analysis of subgroups and asked that this be circulated to all members of the Committee for information.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

### **ECCNSC/23/67      Update on the role of Neighbourhood Teams in engaging Manchester residents on Climate Change**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) that described 12 months of activity to engage, support and activate Manchester residents to engage in local climate change activity and reduce their carbon footprint.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing updated information summarising activity delivered by the Neighbourhood Teams across the city to influence behaviour and support communities to implement local climate action at ward and neighbourhood level in the last 12 months;
- An update on the development of Ward Climate Change Action Plans, including consideration of the recommendations of the Ward Climate Change Action Plans Task and Finish Group and publication of those plans to promote engagement and behaviour change;
- Information on the development of the monitoring framework to assess impact of those Ward Climate Change Action Plans;

- Examples of developing best practice in engagement at a local level contributing to the ambition of Manchester becoming a zero carbon city by 2038;
- Updates on the progress towards ward plans containing specific, measurable, achievable targets; and
- Summary and next steps.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- The Committee paid tribute to the staff working in Neighbourhood Teams, acknowledging the integral role they played in supporting residents and delivering climate change activities;
- Welcoming the development of Ward Climate Change Action Plans and suggesting that an event should be arranged to review these at an appropriate time;
- Would training that had been delivered to officers on Ward Climate Change Action Plans be extended to Councillors;
- What was the relationship between Ward Climate Change Action Plans and ward coordination;
- Was climate resilience acknowledged;
- Consideration needed to be given to the format of the Council's webpage where Ward Climate Change Action Plans were located as the landing page was not very engaging;
- The need to share best practice and learning across Neighbourhood Teams on the delivery of Ward Climate Change Action Plans;
- The importance of identifying key advocates and trusted networks in neighbourhoods to act as peer to peer coordinators on climate action; and
- Noting the importance of intergenerational work and activities on the subject of climate change.

The Strategic Lead, Neighbourhoods said that training could be arranged for Councillors. She informed the Committee that officers within the Neighbourhood Teams would be attending a first workshop on the issue of risk and resilience on Friday 15 December 2023. The intention was to build upon and enhance this learning. She described that Neighbourhood Managers were responsible for ward coordination and Climate Change Action Plans were an element of the wider ward plans. With regard to the webpage, she advised that she would review this but commented that there were restrictions as to what could be displayed on the Council's website as the site must be Disability Discrimination Act compliant.

The Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods stated that a review of ward coordination would be undertaken, noting that a 'one size fits all' approach was not appropriate as it needed to be fluid to reflect and respond to the needs and aspirations of the local neighbourhood. She further paid tribute to the work undertaken by the Neighbourhood Teams especially in the context of their wider role and responsibilities. She stated that good practice and learning was shared across the different Neighbourhood Teams.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport acknowledged the discussion regarding the Council's website and commented that a wider review of this would be

undertaken to ensure that key messaging and information on climate change was reflected across all Council activities.

In concluding this item of business, the Chair commented on the positive progress reported to date and acknowledged the work undertaken by the Ward Climate Change Action Plans Task and Finish Group.

## **Decision**

The Committee recommend that the Executive Member for Environment and Transport and the Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods consider options for reviewing Ward Climate Change Action Plans, and this process to involve the voice of residents.

### **ECCNSC/23/68      Manchester Climate Change Agency In Our Nature Progress and Wider Community Engagement Update**

The Committee considered the report of the Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency that provided an overview of Manchester Climate Change Agency's (MCCA's) community engagement activity over the past 12-months.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- An update on the In Our Nature Programme, noting that to date the programme had engaged directly with over 650 Manchester residents in 15 Wards and was helping them to deliver 26 climate projects that included tackling energy efficiency at home, increasing use of public transport, local food growing, reducing textile waste and more.
- Information on the Manchester Climate Change Youth Partnership, noting that this Partnership was for 16–28-year-olds in Manchester who wanted to be part of climate change decision-making and action in the city. In 2021 the Youth Partnership produced its own Youth Manifesto which contains 7 key priorities for young people in Manchester; and
- Information on the EU FoodWave Project, noting that this project worked to build an international community of young people (aged 15-35) who were active across 17 countries worldwide. It aimed to create awareness of sustainable approaches to consuming and producing food in cities in support of climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, and to have an influential voice in city-level decision making.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Reiterating the invitation to the Manchester Climate Change Youth Partnership to engage with the Committee;
- The need to focus activities on those highest emitters of carbon; and
- Asking the Director of the Manchester Climate Change Agency if she was satisfied with the progress to date in relation to In Our Nature.

The Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency stated that she was pleased with the In Our Nature progress to date, she described that there was activity across 15

wards, delivering a range of projects that were all aligned to the Framework. She said that they had very good relationships with the local Neighbourhood Teams that had resulted in a lot of synergy. She described that the range of engagement was good and balanced, and that good practice and learning was shared. She stated that the Local Area Carbon Footprints were a useful tool to identify those larger carbon emitting wards and could be used to inform local activities. She said that all levers and spheres of influence would continue to be utilised to inform and deliver campaigns on the issue of climate change.

In regard to the invitation to the Manchester Climate Change Youth Partnership, the Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency stated that she would pass this on again, adding that the Youth Partnership determined their own work programme.

Going forward, the Director, Manchester Climate Change Agency said the intention was to build on the positive work and experience to date to maximise impact and meet or exceed all milestones. She stated that it was an implicit understanding of the programme to reach and engage with new people on the issue of climate change, adding that this would form part of the overall evaluation.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

### **ECCNSC/23/69      Embedding Carbon Literacy within the Council**

The Committee considered the report of Human Resources, Organisational Development and Transformation that provided information on the progress being made towards embedding a zero-carbon culture within the Council.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background, noting the embedding zero-carbon in the workforce formed part of Workstream 5 'Catalysing Change and Behaviour Change' of the Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan Work Plan; and
- Providing an update and narrative describing progress against identified actions.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Was individual feedback obtained from participants who had undertaken the carbon literacy training;
- A member reported that he had attended the carbon literacy training and had found it very interesting and informative;
- Was there any consideration being given to delivering carbon literacy training to community groups and other relevant stakeholders outside of the Council; and
- Was there any capacity for teams working across the Council to discuss opportunities to take actions to reduce and if so was there a mechanism to measure impact and outcomes.

The Strategic Head of Organisational Development & Transformation welcomed the positive feedback from the Member of his experience when undertaking the training. She paid tribute to the team of trainers who were delivering this programme, adding that they were committed to delivering this training and that those staff had been formally accredited and was an opportunity for staff to undertake professional development. In response to a specific question, she confirmed that the training was extended to Manchester Active staff.

The Strategic Head of Organisational Development & Transformation responded by saying that individual feedback following training was obtained and this was reviewed. She said that this feedback had informed changes as to how the training was delivered following feedback on the issue of accessibility. She said that it was acknowledged that teams working across different Directorates had competing demands and working patterns so the training had been adapted so as to target teams so as to maximise take up. She said that all new staff were required to attend the carbon literacy training as part of their formal induction training.

She said that as part of Service Planning, teams were being asked to consider and embed carbon reduction and establish specific actions. Consideration would be given as to how this activity could be tracked and reported.

The Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Transport made reference to a recent event at Central Library that she had attended where Community Leaders had undertaken Carbon Literacy training. She described this event as being very positive. She further commented that Manchester Council was leading on the issue of carbon literacy training for staff and that other authorities were seeking to replicate the Manchester model as it was recognised as good practice.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport noted the comments regarding extending the carbon literacy training to people outside of the Council, noting the issue of capacity that would be required to deliver this at scale. She said that options to deliver this were being discussed the Climate Change Agency. The Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Transport commented that Manchester Metropolitan University had committed to delivering carbon literacy training to all their staff and students.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport concluded that positive progress had been made on the delivery of carbon literacy training for Council staff and this could be evidenced.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

## **ECCNSC/23/70 Weed Pilot (Streets)**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) that provided an update on the findings of a project undertaken during 2023 to trial an alternative weed control methodology (hot foam) to assess its effectiveness and viability as a potential alternative to glyphosate for weed control on streets.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background, noting that the report did not include information about the approach to weed control for other land types maintained by the Council;
- The Council had adapted a service across different land types in-line with guidelines published by the Pesticide Action Network (PAN), to support the reduction of the use of glyphosate and utilising alternative approaches;
- Describing steps taken to reduce glyphosate use;
- Reporting that in March 2023, officers had undertaken a detailed look at whether hot foam could be utilised as a non-herbicide weed control treatment on streets in Manchester and providing an analysis of these trials;
- Conclusions of the trials undertaken with hot foam as a method of weed control, noting that hot foam did not yet represent a viable alternative;
- Describing that the trial had demonstrated the importance of testing alternative weed control methodology as part of the strategy to reduce dependency on glyphosate; and
- The Council would continue to horizon scan developments in alternative weed control methodologies and working practices within the sector, and the Council should seek to test other alternative methods as appropriate.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Welcoming the reduction of the use of glyphosate;
- What would be the level of use of glyphosate in a blended model of weed control;
- Noting the cost analysis provided in relation to the use of hot foam, why was this still being considered as an option;
- Noting that the report referred to the use of different options as a method of weed control, what were they;
- Was there an opportunity for electric vehicles to be used for the delivery of hot foam;
- The need to engage and educate residents on the subject of weeds, noting that there were competing views on this issue and how residents regarded them;
- Noting the importance of consideration of biodiversity when considering the approach to weed control; and
- What was the feedback from residents in those pilot wards.

The Strategic Lead, Waste, Recycling & Street Cleansing stated that there were a range of factors to consider when deciding which approach was the most appropriate method of weed control, and that the intention was to strike the correct balance with due consideration given to all alternatives. She said that the use of hot foam would be one tool in a suite of options, noting that it had proven to be an effective method and consideration could be given as to modifying the model of delivery and responding to technological improvements. She stated that they were keenly alive to the discussions regarding the use of glyphosate and reiterated that the use of this had reduced over the years with due regard given to best practice and the recommendations from the Pesticide Action Network. Noting the need to balance an effective programme of weed control in the context of Council budgets and



environment considerations and the Council remained committed to trialling different alternative options of weed control.

The Strategic Lead, Waste, Recycling & Street Cleansing noted the comments from Members and stated that the intention was to establish a policy on the subject of weed control. The Committee welcomed this as a positive development, commenting that this would provide helpful clarification as to the Council's approach to this activity.

The Strategic Lead, Waste, Recycling & Street Cleansing acknowledged the discussion regarding engagement and education on the topic of weeds and the opposing views, adding that this would be included in future resident communications.

The Chair stated that local Councillors had been active in promoting and engaging with local residents in the selected pilot wards. She commented that the experience had been very positive.

The Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods stated that further research needed to be undertaken in regard to weed removal. She said that it was important to understand this activity in the context of the restraints on Council budgets and the ambition for the city to be clean and green and it was important to strike the correct balance. She further commented that it was important to manage resident expectations in regards to weed removal.

## **Decision**

The Committee agree;

1. The Council's approach to reduce dependency on glyphosate in a phased approach, looking at a suite of herbicide free treatments to support this and build on success achieved to date.
2. To receive future updates on the approach in the annual waste and recycling report.

[Councillors Razaq, Shilton Godwin and Wright declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in this item as they are residents of the Chorlton Park ward that was referred to in the pilot scheme.]

## **ECCNSC/23/71      Overview Report**

The report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which contained key decisions within the Committee's remit and responses to previous recommendations was submitted for comment. Members were also invited to agree the Committee's future work programme.

## **Decision**

The Committee notes the report and agrees the work programme.

## **ECCNSC/23/72      Large Scale Renewable Energy Generation – Power Purchase Agreement (Part A)**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that provided an update on the progress of the City Council's proposal to purchase renewable energy supplies via a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) to ensure the Council has a long-term, cost-effective supply of renewable energy to meet its energy needs and achieve its Zero Carbon objectives to reduce the Council's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background, noting that the Council's Climate Change Action Plan included a commitment to research and identify options for large scale renewable energy generation to deliver either a solar asset and / or suitable Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) to achieve a traceable, renewable energy source to deliver CO<sub>2</sub> savings and maximise long-term benefits for the Council;
- Describing the background to the work undertaken to date, including an assessment of the Council's energy demand and relevant details of progress made to purchase a PPA for supply of energy to the Council;
- Information on the Council Energy Purchasing Policy and Integration with PPA Product; and
- Describing that the process of securing a Power Purchase Agreement, noting that following conclusion of the mandatory standstill period and subject to Council approval, the Council would formally announce the bidder which it would be contracting with on the PPA arrangement in January 2024.

The Chair had invited Councillor Simcock, Chair of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Kilpatrick, member of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee to participate in this agenda item.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Reiterating the position previously expressed by the Committee that the government had failed to decarbonise the national grid, adding that this abdication of leadership had placed an unfair burden on local authorities and set a dangerous precedent;
- This message needed be explicit in any future communications with residents on this issue;
- Had cooperative or mutual models of delivery been considered;
- Further information was sought on the procurement process and the due diligence process;
- Noting that these arrangements were not uncommon within the commercial sector; and
- What facilities would the electricity generated from the PPA service.

The Head of Commercial Governance, Assurance and Initiatives noted the comments expressed by the Committee in relation to the decarbonisation of the national grid and stated the delivery of a PPA would help the city achieve its carbon

reduction ambitions. With regard to cooperative and mutual models, she said options for this had been considered however they were not currently viable. In response to the historical decisions taken in relation to PPA she stated that those decisions were correct at that time. She confirmed that the electricity purchased through any PPA would service Council buildings, street lighting and the fleet. She acknowledged that this model was tried and tested in the private sector and commented that there was growing interest across the public sector in these arrangements.

The Head of Commercial Governance, Assurance stated that answers and detailed responses to Members questions and comments in relation to the procurement process would be addressed under the Part B confidential section of the meeting.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport stated that she would continue to lobby the government on this issue of decarbonisation of the national grid. She stated the approach to the PPA had been rigorously tested by the Tyndall Centre and they were supportive of the proposals to support the Council achieve its carbon budget ambitions. She concluded by paying tribute to the officers involved in progressing this detailed, complex and important work on behalf of the Council.

### **Decision**

To note the report.

### **ECCNSC/23/73      Exclusion of Press and Public**

### **Decision**

That the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item which involved consideration of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of particular persons and public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

### **ECCNSC/23/74      Large Scale Renewable Energy Generation – Power Purchase Agreement (Part B - Press and Public Excluded)**

The Committee considered the confidential report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that provided details around the commercial, financial and legal arrangements in respect of the purchase of a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) as part of the Large-Scale Renewable Energy Generation Project to act as a key contributor to enable the Council to meet the Zero Carbon targets.

Officers were present to respond to Member's questions.

The Committee was invited to comment on the report before its submission to the Executive on 13 December 2023.

### **Decision**

The Committee endorse the recommendations being asked of Executive, as set out in the report.

# **Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2024**

### **Present:**

Councillor Shilton Godwin – in the Chair  
Councillors Holt, Ilyas, McCaul, Wiest and Wright

**Apologies:** Councillor Chohan, Collins and Razaq

### **Also present:**

Councillor Rawlins, Executive Member for Environment and Transport  
Councillor Foley, Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Transport  
Councillor Igbon, Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods  
Councillor Ahmed Ali, Deputy Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods  
Councillor White, Executive Member for Housing and Development  
Neil Robinson, Corporate Social Responsibility & Future Airspace Director, MAG (Manchester Airports Group)  
Dr Bethan Owen, Research Fellow at Centre for Aviation, Transport and the Environment  
Samantha Nicholson, Director Manchester Climate Agency  
Megan Black, Head of Logistics & Environment TfGM

## **ECCNSC/24/01      Minutes**

### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 December 2023 as a correct record.

## **ECCNSC/24/02      Compliance and Enforcement Services - Performance in 2022/23**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) that provided an update on demand for and performance of the Compliance and Enforcement service during 2022/23. The report also provided a forward look at on-going and new challenges as a result of changes to legislation, policy and areas of growth that would have an impact on the work carried out by Compliance and Enforcement teams.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background to the service;
- Describing the variety of teams that make up the Compliance and Enforcement services and their remits;
- Information on the demand on service with comparative data;
- Case studies across a range of activities;
- Information on proactive work across a range of activities;
- Information on programmed work across a range of activities;

- Information and data relating to formal enforcement action;
- Discussion of ongoing and emerging challenges; and
- An update on the introduction of the new case management system.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Welcoming the informative report and suggesting that this report be circulated to all Councillors for information;
- Recognising the work undertaken by the staff in the various teams to improve the environment for the residents of Manchester;
- Were there enough resources across the teams to deliver the scale of work described;
- Noting that benchmarking and comparative data would be useful in future update reports with consideration given to population change;
- Noting that in the future the Committee may wish to consider receiving reports on specific activities of interest so that deeper consideration could be given to a specific area;
- What was the approach to removing graffiti from private land;
- Had there been any analysis undertaken as to the impact of using CCTV to tackle environmental crimes;
- What was the approach taken to fly-tipping incidents when legal action was not pursued;
- Were fines secured as a result of legal action ringfenced for the respective service area taking enforcement action;
- Noting the proliferation of vape shops on the high street, often selling illegal products and the public health risk these posed to specifically to young people;
- The issue of damp and mould in housing was an issue for many residents across the city;
- Illegal evictions and the use of Section 21 Notice to Quit needed to end;
- Calling for more enforced sales of empty properties to bring more houses back into the market;
- Who would enforce any breaches of a Construction Management Plan; and
- More Selective Licensing Schemes needed to be established to ensure greater control of the Private Rented Sector and to raise housing conditions within the Private Rented Sector.

The Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety welcomed the positive comments from the Committee and said that this would be relayed to the staff. She further paid tribute to her colleagues who had collated all of the information to publish in the report. She addressed the issue of benchmarking and said that this would be difficult to meaningfully do as Manchester did more than many other Local Authorities and different Local Authorities organised their services differently which made comparing like with like challenging. She stated that they did use statistics published at a national level, where these were available, and liaised with other core cities to share learning and good practice. She said that the Compliance and Performance Team did monitor trends and were alive to the issue of population trends. She commented that the new case management system that would replace the current FLARE system would strengthen this work.

The Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety said that it was the responsibility of the land / property owner to remove graffiti. She said that information was available on the Council's website to advise people as to where responsibilities rested depending on the tenure of land/property. She said that they would work with landowners to encourage them to remove graffiti and ultimately the Council could undertake enforcement action and remove graffiti, however she added that this would be at a cost to the public purse. She did clarify that any racist or hate crime related graffiti would be removed. She said that where fly-tipping cases were not pursued for legal action due to a lack of evidence this would be removed, adding that all Requests for Service were looked into by officers.

The Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety stated that additional resources for teams would always be welcomed. She said that all available resources were deployed to deliver the work and respond to changes in legislation. She stated that when considered necessary, a business case would be prepared for additional resources.

The Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety said that CCTV was a useful tool to identify vehicles that were responsible for fly-tipping and other environmental crimes. She added that any prosecutions were publicised via press releases. In reply to the question relating to Construction Management Plans she commented that this would be the responsibility of Planning.

In response to the discussion regarding the selling of vapes, the Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety said that this was an issue that cut across a number of services. She said that Trading Standards did undertake test purchasing exercises and that Trading Standards worked closely with Greater Manchester Police (GMP). She said that local intelligence from residents and Councillors helped to inform how work was targeted and all powers available were used to address the issue of illegal vapes and the selling to minors. She said that currently this was a significant area of work for the service and work was ongoing with Public Health colleagues to reiterate and articulate the key messaging on this issue.

In response to a question regarding people trafficking, the Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety said that this crime fell within the remit of GMP, however if staff became aware of any suspected cases when undertaking their routine activities they would make the appropriate referral, in a similar way any safeguarding referrals would be made if officers had any concerns.

The Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety said that the allocation of money resulting from enforcement action and fines depended on the legislation under which the action was taken. She said that, for example, receipts from Fixed Penalty Notices and Civil Penalties would be retained by the Council and ringfenced, however, some fines issued by the Courts would be paid to the Treasury.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development said that Manchester was alert to the issue of damp and mould, illegal evictions and continued the call for an end to Section 21 evictions. He said that any tenant could make a Request for Service for issues related to damp and mould, adding that they did not have to live within a

designated Selective Licensing area. He commented that everyone was entitled to live in safe accommodation and Manchester would continue to support residents. He said that the intention was to extend the Selective Licensing Scheme and progress against this ambition was reported to the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

The Executive Member for Housing and Development said that the legal process to secure and enforce the sale of an empty property was complex and could be lengthy, however it was the intention to increase the exercising of a range of powers to bring more empty properties back into use.

The Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods paid tribute to the staff working across the various teams who worked hard, with many competing pressures on behalf of the residents of the city. She stated that the service was understaffed due to the ongoing budget restrictions that had been imposed on the Council over the previous years that had seen cuts to Neighbourhood Services. She made a call for action by residents, businesses and partners to make changes and take action to improve the physical environment of the city and neighbourhoods.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

[Councillor Wright declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest as she is an employee at His Majesty's Revenue and Customs]

### **ECCNSC/24/03      Climate Change Action Plan Quarterly Progress Report: Quarter 3 Update report**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that provided provides an update and overview of progress made in delivering the Council's refreshed Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) during Quarter 3 2023-24 (October – December 2023)

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background, noting that the refreshed CCAP was endorsed by the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee and approved by the Council's Executive Committee in September 2022;
- Providing an update on carbon emissions and noting that emissions reported as part of the Quarter 3 report covered the previous quarter (Q2), in this case July to September 2023 due to energy billing being quarterly in arrears;
- Reporting that as a result of the National Grid increasing the amount of natural gas and coal in the production of electricity over the last year, this had increased the carbon intensity of the national electricity system by 7%, which in turn impacted our own emissions, via the conversion factor; and
- Information relating to the key messages for Quarter 3 across a range of activities, noting that since 2020 the Council had remained within its carbon budget each year and the Quarter 3 report showed continued progress was being made with the Council being on track to meet its 2025 target.



Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Welcoming the report and the progress reported to date;
- Was there any risk to the Active Travel Plans for the city as a result of national government funding arrangements;
- Noting the lack of government funding to support the ambitions of the city, particularly in relation to the important issue of housing retrofit;
- Welcoming the production of the 'Developer Design Guide' and the review of the 'Manchester Build Standard' planned for 2024;
- Welcoming the information provided on the full stock condition survey that had been undertaken across the whole Council owned housing stock as part of the Housing Carbon Reduction workstream;
- Welcoming the information provided in relation to Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems; and
- Supporting the proposal for Manchester to become a Carbon Literate City.

The Zero Carbon Manager commented that progress on the delivery of the Active Travel Plan was periodically reported to the Committee and any relevant updates would be included in the next update report. She said that the Highways Department had been significantly involved in drafting the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Guide. She commented an issue was in relation to the ongoing maintenance of these and consideration was being given to this. She commented that the stock condition survey had been a useful exercise as this would inform the work around the issue of Housing Carbon Reduction.

The Zero Carbon Manager stated that there was planned projection of the carbon budget towards 2038, noting that the impact on this by such initiatives such as the Power Purchase Arrangements would need to be reported, adding that it was important to recognise that some initiatives would contribute to Manchester's zero carbon ambition but impact may not be realised immediately and consideration would be given as to how best to articulate this trajectory and report to Committee. She also stated that consideration was also been given to the next reiteration of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan and this would be considered by the Committee at the appropriate time.

In response to a question asked in relation to housing retrofit the Zero Carbon Manager noted that a substantive report on this topic was scheduled for consideration by the Committee at the March meeting.

The Head of City Policy commented that a full review of the Manchester Build Standard was planned for 2024. Once the review was completed, the work would be considered for inclusion in the new Manchester Local Plan along with other policy proposals.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport responded to the discussion relating to government funding and stated that the continued lobbying for additional funding was undertaken and all available resources were used to support the activities described.

## Decision

To note the report.

### **ECCNSC/24/04 Manchester Airport and Aviation Emissions**

The Committee considered the report of the Manchester City Council, Manchester Airports Group, Centre for Aviation and Transport and Environment, Manchester Climate Change Agency that provided an update on emissions from Manchester Airport and aviation.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Discussion of the Council's role in relation to reducing aviation emissions via its shareholder relationship to Manchester Airports Group (MAG) who own and operate three UK airports including Manchester Airport, its membership of Manchester Climate Change Partnership and as an employer;
- An update from MAG which provided information on their work to decarbonise their ground operations and flights to and from Manchester Airport;
- A report from the Centre for Aviation, Transport and Environment (CATE) based at Manchester Metropolitan University on estimating the scale and impact of non-CO<sub>2</sub> aviation emissions on climate; and
- A report from the University of Manchester who had been commissioned by the Manchester Climate Change Agency and Partnership which sought to estimate the aviation related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from flights taken by Manchester residents.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Challenging the continued narrative that the economic benefits of the airport outweighed the need to take immediate action to address the climate emergency;
- Challenging the assertion that aviation emissions could be reduced by technology, asserting that this was largely untested and unproven;
- There was no accompany carbon reduction action plan to report progress and key milestones;
- Noting that there was a contradiction between using agricultural land and domestic waste to manufacture Sustainable Aviation Fuel when the wider message and intention was to reduce waste;
- The need to reduce the number of flights taken, adding that the report appeared to celebrate an increase in passenger numbers;
- The number of domestic flights needed to reduce, and people should use other forms of sustainable transport;
- Criticising the cancellation of HS2 to Manchester; and
- Challenging the assertion that an increase in the costs of flights due to the introduction of new technologies would reduce passenger numbers, adding that affluent people would continue to fly and the less well-off would be excluded.

Neil Robinson, CSR & Future Airspace Director, MAG stated that industry initiatives, such as increased efficiency in the use of aircraft and airspace would contribute to reducing emissions associated with the aviation industry. He said that Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) was a proven technology, and the challenge was now to produce

this at scale to service the aviation industry. He said that there were plans to establish five production plants across the UK, with one of the servicing Manchester Airport directly. He further commented that existing generation of aircraft could use a minimum of 10% SAF. In terms of carbon savings, he said that this would be realised through the life cycle of SAF, namely in the manufacturing of SAF as opposed to kerosene. He further commented that the approach was consistent with the government's Jet Zero strategy, the framework and plan for achieving net zero aviation by 2050 and was consistent with the national carbon budget. He commented that support of this strategy was reflected across the industry nationally. He also referred to hydrogen and electric technology, adding that this had previously not been included in plans, however as technological advances had been made these were now included. He further reiterated the economic impact of the airport for the city, noting that a report on this subject had been considered by the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee at their recent December meeting.

In response to the discussion relating to domestic flights, Neil Robinson, CSR & Future Airspace Director, MAG stated that analysis of these indicated that the majority of these journeys included crossing a body of water and would require an alternative journey in excess of four hours.

Dr Bethan Owen, Research Fellow at Centre for Aviation, Transport and the Environment (CATE) stated that that the aviation industry was a global industry, and it was important to consider this topic in terms of an international context and that global action was the best way to address aviation emissions.

The Head of City Policy stated that MAG was a member of the Climate Change Partnership and MAG were leading on the issue aviation emissions at a national and international level. He further commented that the 10 Greater Manchester Local Authorities shareholding resulted in places on the Board at MAG which facilitated challenge and conversations on this issue. He further commented that it was important to acknowledge that the airport was carbon neutral in relation to its ground operations and has committed to being zero carbon by 2038.

The Director of Manchester Climate Change Agency reiterated the role of the Partnership to bring stakeholders together to encourage and facilitate action to tackle the climate emergency.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport acknowledged the strength of feeling expressed by the Committee and said that consideration would be given as to how best to present and report this topic to future meetings of the Committee.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

## **ECCNSC/24/05      Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan Update**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director, Growth and Development that provided information on the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan

(GM CAP) as submitted to the Joint Air Quality Unit for consideration, December 2023.

Appended to the report for reference was the complete report that had been considered by the Greater Manchester Air Quality Administration Committee at their meeting of 20 December 2023.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background;
- Noting that the 10 GM local authorities were committed to delivering an investment-led, non-charging GM Clean Air Plan;
- Discussion on the development of an investment-led Clean Air Plan for Greater Manchester;
- Consideration of the bus investment of £51.2 million;
- The approach to taxis and associated taxi licensing conditions to reduce associated emissions; and
- Targeted Local Traffic Management Measures.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Whilst recognising the approach of Greater Manchester to improve air quality, Manchester should develop a bespoke, Manchester specific strategy to improve air quality that exceeds the national minimum standard;
- Noting that poor air quality represented a significant public health risk to all residents of the city;
- Was wind conditions and the impact of high building factored into modelling'
- The need to articulate a collective message on the issue of air quality;
- A member commented that he was not confident that the modelling in relation to Quay Street would improve air quality and this needed to be considered in the context of the wider road network; and
- The need to consider wood burners and the impact these had on air quality.

The Head of Logistics & Environment TfGM stated that Greater Manchester was now dependent on the government to provide a response to the submission.

The Head of Network Management described the modelling that had been undertaken to inform the plans for Quay Street and adjacent streets to allow access and address issues of through traffic. Officers also stated that high buildings and the impact these had on air quality was factored into any modelling, however accepted that this needed to be strengthened. Members were advised that any schemes would be monitored and evaluated following their introduction.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport stated that conversations had already commenced to develop a Manchester specific clean air plan, and this would be reported to the Committee at an appropriate time. The Committee were further advised that a GM campaign in relation to wood burners had been recently launched and information would be circulated to the Committee.

## **Decision**

To note the report.

### **ECCNSC/24/06      Overview Report**

The report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which contained key decisions within the Committee's remit and responses to previous recommendations was submitted for comment. Members were also invited to agree the Committee's future work programme.

## **Decision**

The Committee notes the report and agrees the work programme.