

## **Manchester City Council Report for Information**

**Report to:** Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny  
Committee – 8 February 2024  
Executive – 14 February 2024

**Subject:** Neighbourhoods Directorate Budget 2024/25

**Report of:** Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

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### **Summary**

Local Government is under profound financial pressure, largely due to externally driven cost and demand pressures at a national level particularly affecting Adults Services, Children's Services and Homelessness. It is in this context that the Council must set a balanced budget.

Following the provisional finance settlement announced 18 December the Council is forecasting an estimated budget shortfall of £38m in 2024/25, £79m in 2025/26, and £90m by 2026/27. After the application of approved and planned savings, and the use of c.£17m smoothing reserves in each of the three years, the budget is balanced for 2024/25 and the remaining gap reduces to £29m in 2025/26 and £41m by 2026/27. This position assumes that savings of £21.4m will be delivered next year.

This report provides a further update to members on the priorities for the services in the remit of this committee and details the changes to the initial revenue budget options proposed by officers in November 2023. Each scrutiny committee is invited to consider the proposed budget changes that are within its remit and to make recommendations to the Executive before it agrees to the final budget proposals on 14 February 2024.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to: -

- (1) To consider and comment on the forecast medium term revenue budget.
  - (2) Consider the content of this report and comment on the proposed changes which are relevant to the remit of this scrutiny committee.
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**Wards Affected:** All

<p><b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> -the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city</p>	<p>The budget reflects the fact that the Council has declared a climate emergency by making carbon reduction a key consideration in the Council's planning and budget proposals.</p>
<p><b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments</p>	<p>Consideration has been given to how the proposed savings could impact on different protected or disadvantaged groups. Where applicable proposals will be subject to completion of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and an Anti-Poverty Assessment.</p>

<p><b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b></p>	<p><b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy</b></p>
<p>A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities</p>	<p>The effective use of resources underpins the Council's activities in support of its strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan which is underpinned by the Our Manchester Strategy.</p>
<p>A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success</p>	
<p>A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities</p>	
<p>A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work</p>	
<p>A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth</p>	

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

### **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

The changes included within this report will, subject to Member comments and consultation, be included in the final 2024/25 revenue budget set by Council on 1 March 2024.

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

None directly arising from this report.

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### **Background documents (available for public inspection):**

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

[Medium Term Financial Strategy and 2023/24 Revenue Budget – Executive 15 February 2023](#)

## **1. Introduction and purpose**

- 1.1 The report sets out a service overview and key priorities including an update on the Climate Action Plan, along with the latest draft budgets for the services within the remit of this scrutiny committee. The proposed budget contains details of the already approved savings and investments, along with additional proposed savings for consideration and comment as part of the budget process in order to help the Council deliver an overall balanced 2024/25 budget.

This report is a follow on from the initial budget report brought to the November Committee meeting. The proposals in this report reflect the overall changes to the Council's budget position following the Autumn Statement and Provisional Finance Settlement in December. This report should be read with the covering budget report to this committee. This report covers the services under the remit of the scrutiny committee.

## **2. Service overview and priorities**

- 2.1 Neighbourhood Service Directorate has a wide range of services and employs over 1,916 staff. The Directorate works to improve the lives of Manchester residents and showcase the city to our millions of visitors every year. Our services work directly with the people of Manchester and together we want to make Manchester a better place to live, work and play. We have committed, via the Our Manchester Strategy to creating sustainable, safe, resilient, and cohesive neighbourhoods, with more affordable housing, good quality green spaces, and accessible culture and sporting facilities. We will work with colleagues and partners to achieve our zero-carbon ambition by 2038 at the latest, via green growth, low- carbon energy, retrofitting of buildings, green infrastructure, and increasing climate resilience.

- 2.2 The services under the remit of this committee includes the following services:

### **Parks and Green Spaces**

- 2.3. As part of our vision for Manchester to be in the topflight of world-class cities by 2025, our Parks team ensure that residents and visitors can regularly enjoy relaxation and sports in green, open spaces, parks, and riversides - rich in wildlife. This contributes to helping residents lead healthy, active lifestyles and bringing people together to enjoy their leisure time across the city.

### **Compliance**

- 2.4 Enforce the law in a fair and consistent manner, helping businesses to meet <sup>(O&B)</sup> their legal obligations and taking firm action against those who disregard the law or act irresponsibly.

### **Grounds Maintenance**

- 2.5 The service works across the city, tending to parks, roadsides, and green spaces. They work closely with partners to ensure improved standards of cleanliness across the city.

### **Waste and Street Cleansing**

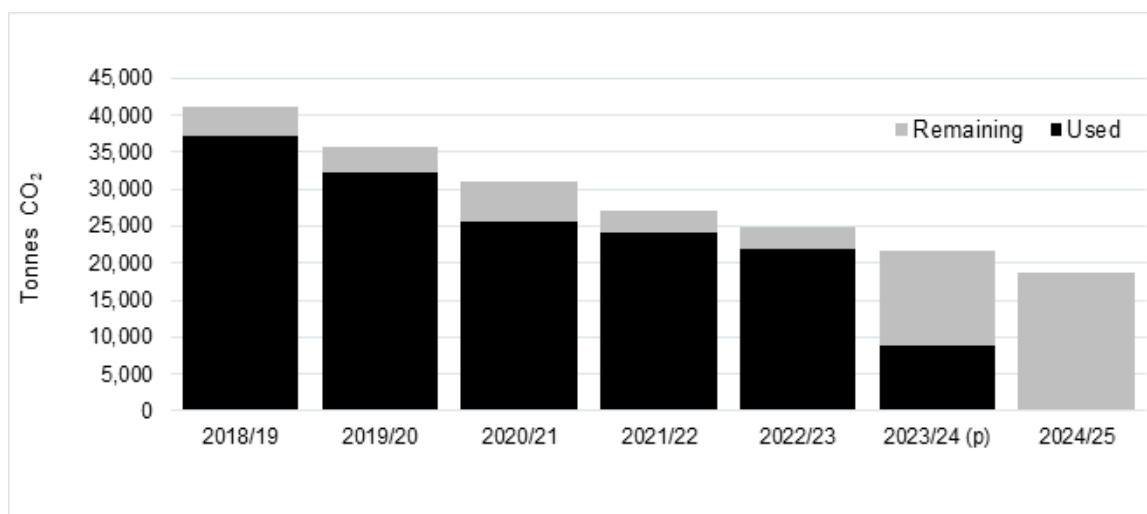
- 2.6. Work very closely with the collections provider to improve street cleansing standards across the city and reduce bin collection issues, work with Neighbourhood Teams, Neighbourhood Compliance Teams, and other services to develop, coordinate, and monitor a range of programmes and activities to encourage residents and businesses to manage their waste legitimately and increase recycling.

### **Waste Disposal Levy**

- 2.7. The monies paid over to Greater Manchester Combined Authority to fund the costs of recycling and waste disposal across GM (Greater Manchester), including the operation of the Household Waste Recycling centres (tips).

### **Climate Change Action Plan Update**

- 2.8. In September 2022, the City Council's Executive Committee approved a refresh of the [Manchester Climate Change Action Plan](#) (CCAP) 2020-25, which reinforced the Council's climate change ambitions to lead by example (by taking action to reduce its own organisational impact on the environment) and take a citywide leadership role.
- 2.9 The Council's own carbon emissions goal is to reduce its direct CO<sub>2</sub> emissions year on year to reach zero-carbon by 2038 and remain within its set carbon budget. These emissions relate to Council buildings, streetlights, waste collection, operational fleet, and Council business travel.
- 2.10 The City Council's 2020-25 CCAP carbon budget is 126,336 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> (tCO<sub>2</sub>). To date, the Council has used 62.3% of the carbon budget so far, which means the Council has made good progress to date and is on track to remain within the five-year carbon budget to 2025.
- 2.11 Figure 1 below shows the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions used each year of the CCAP 2020-25 against the annual emissions budget, commencing from the baseline year, 2018/19 to highlight the year-on-year budget reduction and downward trend.



\*2023/24 - includes emissions from the first two quarters - April to September 2023

2.12 As the Council's refreshed CCAP sets out, as well as continuing to reduce its own direct CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and take action on climate change across all areas of the Council, going forward there will be more emphasis on our city leadership role. Working in partnership and supporting residents and partners across the city to play their full part in reducing the city's carbon emissions to meet the science-based target, including ensuring a just transition for residents.

2.13 To enable the delivery of the commitments set out in the Council's CCAP, further revenue and capital investment from a variety of funding sources over multiple financial years is critical, but also a major challenge. In 2022, as part of the CCAP governance, a Finance & Investment Sub-group was established to support this work by exploring investment opportunities in the zero carbon agenda, developing public/private partnerships and exploring innovative funding models. The Sub-group also has a focus on growing MCC's capacity and knowledge by building on best practice and developing new networks and approaches to delivering climate action. In December 2023, the Council and GMCA were awarded up to **£7m** from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero for a joint Net Zero Accelerator project to support delivery of the GM Local Area Energy Plan through the development, demonstration and scale up of new investment and delivery models.

### ***Delivering Manchester City Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2025***

2.14 To date, the Council has secured approximately **£319m** (£92m of which has been secured during the last 12 months) to deliver the 5-year Climate Change Action Plan. The breakdown of this funding by source is as follows:

- **£145m** via the Council (including investment in LED streetlighting, Civic Quarter Heat Network, Estates Carbon Reduction, purchase

of Electric Refuse Collection Vehicles, Tree Planting, social housing new low carbon homes & retrofit, education setting summit and new climate change posts), and including:

- £0.946m funding for the Manchester Climate Change Agency to support with staffing and operational costs. This funding has built leadership capacity across the city’s partners and has enabled over £3m of funding to be attracted to delivering citywide climate action.
- £0.8m additional ongoing revenue secured as part of 2022/23 budget setting to provide additional staffing capacity (12 new posts) to support delivery of the CCAP (additional details on what these posts are delivering is provided in the table below).
- **£97m** from UK Government (including funding for Mayfield Park, Urban Tree Challenge Fund, Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, Active Travel, Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, HNIP grant contribution to Civic Quarter Heat Network)
- **£55m** from the GMCA (including Active Travel, GM Mayors Challenge Fund)
- **£8.1m** from the European Union (including ERDF funded Unlocking Clean Energy and Homes as Energy Systems, Horizon 2020 funding for West Gorton Park, URBACT C-Change and Zero Carbon Cities projects.
- **£10m** from partners (including One Manchester contribution to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund)
- **£3.6m** from the Manchester Climate Change Agency (including In Our Nature funding from the National Lottery).

2.15 The investment outlined above has assisted the Council in making good progress towards achieving its zero-carbon target by helping to reduce its direct emissions and remain within the carbon budget limit.

2.16 The additional revenue investment secured as part of the 2022/23 budget setting is providing important ongoing additional capacity, particularly in delivering the city-wide actions, as outlined in the table below. All of these posts have now been filled.

Focus	Description
<b>Housing Investment &amp; Retrofit</b>	Develop and deliver a housing retrofit plan for the Council’s social housing stock. Work with Manchester Housing Providers Partnership and wider partners to deliver an approach to housing retrofit across social and private sectors.
<b>Energy &amp; Infrastructure Support</b>	Review and respond to the recommendations of the Local Area Energy Plan, working with Greater Manchester partners to deliver energy infrastructure.
<b>Procurement</b>	Supporting effective implementation and monitoring of the 10% environmental weighting across our procurement processes and supporting MCC Commissioners and suppliers to respond to this request.

<b>City Policy Zero Carbon Team</b>	Develop a plan to eradicate avoidable single use plastics across the Council and at events, and embed this across the Council to work towards being avoidable single use plastic free by 2024. Added capacity to support the Finance & Investment work programme alongside CCAP programme management work of the Zero Carbon Team.
<b>Sustainable Staff Travel</b>	Embed the new Staff Travel Policy across the Council by supporting staff to make sustainable travel choices and delivering Service Engagement sessions to raise awareness of the policy and incentive schemes.
<b>Carbon Literacy</b>	Delivering a comprehensive Carbon Literacy programme which secures our target Gold standard by 2025, while responding to service needs and establishing a mechanism for evaluation.
<b>CCAP Delivery Support</b>	Allocating small amounts of funding to support the delivery of priorities (e.g. support to schools, work with the food sector), which has the potential to enable greater progress.

- 2.17 Continuing to operate within the remainder of the carbon budget will be challenging and the Council will need to continue to identify and secure investment to deliver on its commitments.
- 2.18 The progress that is made is documented and reported both quarterly and annually to senior officers, Members and published on the Council's website. In addition to this, each year, we set out the priorities for the coming year and report against these within the reports. The CCAP Work Programme for 2023/24, which was presented to the Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee in June 2023 can be found [here](#), and the [CCAP Quarterly Progress Updates](#) provide an overview of the delivery of each of the CCAP actions.
- 2.19 Some of the upcoming priority areas for the remainder of the year include:
- entering into contract for a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) following selection of an agreed supplier in December 2023
  - continuing to deliver the Council's Estates decarbonisation programme and develop a strategy to reduce our estates emissions to 2038
  - continuing to deliver housing retrofit and efficiency measures across our own housing stock to deliver the priorities set out in Manchester's Housing Strategy
  - continuing to research new and innovative funding and financing opportunities for investment into this agenda
  - continuing to support Council staff to undertake Carbon Literacy training
  - continuing to invest in active travel infrastructure across the city delivering the Single Use Plastics Reduction Action Plan across the organisation.



### 3 Service budget and proposed changes

3.1 Neighbourhood Services Directorate has an overall gross budget of £262m and a net budget of £139.225m. The Directorate employs 1,916 fte. The budgets which fall under the remit of this scrutiny are reflected in the tables below, with a gross budget of £82.248m, net budgets of £73.801m and an fte of 400.

*Table One: Base budget 2023/24*

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>2023/24 Gross budget £'000</b>	<b>2023 / 24 Net Budget £'000</b>	<b>2023 / 24 Budgeted posts (FTE) £'000</b>
Parks and Green Spaces	3,877	1,864	63
Compliance	11,521	8,937	220
Waste Disposal Levy	30,632	30,632	0
Grounds Maintenance	4,810	4,372	101
Waste and street cleaning	31,408	27,996	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>82,248</b>	<b>73,801</b>	<b>400</b>

3.2 Savings of £0.5m have already been approved for 2024/27 as part of prior year budget approvals and these remain on track to be delivered. The table below sets out the already approved savings and further details are set out in Appendix 1.

<b>Description of savings</b>	<b>2024/25 £000's</b>	<b>2025/26 £000's</b>	<b>2026/27 £000's</b>	<b>Total £000's</b>
Parks and open spaces	100	0	0	100
Waste and street cleansing	0	400	0	400
<b>Total Already Approved Savings</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>500</b>

- a. As part of the 2023/24 budget process savings were identified over a three-year period and it was intended that the 2024/25 budget would be light touch and no further savings would be required. In light of the current financial years pressures and ongoing high inflation rates it has been necessary to revisit the initial assumptions and identify further savings options for consideration.
- b. As part of identifying further savings options the initial priority has been to protect service delivery wherever possible, and this has included looking to increase income generation opportunities where possible.
- c. Review of our existing workforce structures and capacity and in particular how we budget for staffing costs in light of high levels of turnover and allowing for all posts at top of grade.

- d. The proposed savings from services within the remit of this scrutiny committee are summarised below and are set out in more detail in Appendix 1, with further narrative provided in the following paragraphs.

### **Cross Cutting Staff Savings**

- e. Historically there have been staffing underspends across all Council Directorates, this is because of a combination of ongoing vacant posts, the high number of part time posts and staff not being at the top of the grades. To provide a more realistic staffing budget, without reducing capacity it is proposed to reduce staffing budgets by £1m across the council, and Neighbourhood Services proportion of this is £189k, with £26k being within the remit of this scrutiny.
- f. As part annual budget process all sales, fees and charges have been reviewed to ensure that they are services are fully recovering fees where appropriate, and also to ensure that budgets are uplifted where possible to reflect any realignment of budgets because of increased activity, or any increased income from proposed price increases.
- g. As part of the review it is proposed that some external charges are increased by up to 5% from 1st April, and as part of these increases' additional income of £132k is forecast from across the services within the remit of this Committee and this has been reflected within the overall budget as part of the £1m increased income from sales fees and charges. Details of these changes are set out in the table below:

<b>Income Generating Area</b>	<b>Proposed Increase £000's</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Compliance	97	Increase fees and charges by 5%
Waste	37	5% inflationary increase applied to bulky waste collections
<b>Total</b>	<b>266</b>	

- h. In addition to the above price increases that contribute to wider council savings, there are other services that will be increasing prices by up to 5% in order that the additional income can fund increased costs arising from inflationary increases.

### Growth and Pressures 2024-27

- i. As part of the budget proposals an initial £0.9m investment into waste and street cleaning is proposed for 2024/25, this will provide £0.4m investment into waste collection and disposal to provide resources to meet increased demographic needs because of increased numbers of dwellings across the City that will require additional collection rounds.

- j. In addition to the waste collection investment, £400k of investment is proposed for Street Cleaning which recognises the stepped increase in population and footfall whilst providing the ability to deal with hotspots, and £100k to deal with the accumulation of waste on Council land proactive cleansing of land to prevent fly tipping and there is a further £300k in 2026/27.
- k. The annual waste levy costs are driven by forecast tonnages of waste to be disposed of and the costs of disposal. The levy is set by GMCA and based on latest forecasts it is anticipated that this will increase in 2024/25, with the increase to Manchester being £1.532m. Further increases of £1.480m have been assumed for 2025/26 and £1.009m for 2026/27, these increases are reflected in the current budget plans for those years.
- l. **Appendix 3** provides an overview of the forecast medium-term budgets by service. **Appendix 4** provides an objective analysis of the 2023/24 budget to also set out the key areas of income.

#### **4. Commissioning and procurement priorities**

- 4.1 The Directorate will continue to work with Integrated Commissioning and Procurement colleagues to ensure the procurement pipeline is understood and that work to procure contracts is undertaken in a timely manner.
- 4.2 Contract sessions with directorate management teams have been established commencing over September 2023 and quarterly thereafter. The aim of these is to support management teams to understand both their current contractual position and contract spend, and to develop an agreed pipeline of future commissions.
- 4.3 A new Contract Management System is expected to go live during the current financial year. Once operational this will provide Directorates with consistent contract performance information to support contract managers to ensure that contracts deliver against expectations and that opportunities for improvement can be identified and realised more easily.

#### **5. Workforce Implications**

- 5.1 The Council's establishment is fully budgeted for at the top of the grade. In reality there are vacancies caused by staff turnover, recruitment difficulties and staff employed throughout the grade scale. In order to avoid budgeting for costs that will not be required and making bigger cuts elsewhere, adjustments are being made to reflect these issues by applying a vacancy factor to recognise that vacancies will always exist. The continued challenges in filling posts also means that the council is working hard on ensuring we are an employer of choice and can attract people and minimise the pressures on our existing workforce.

## **6. Equality and Anti-Poverty Impact**

- 6.1 Consideration has been given to how the proposed savings could impact on different protected or disadvantaged groups. Where applicable proposals will be subject to completion of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and an Anti-Poverty Assessment as part of the detailed planning and implementation. At this stage no direct impacts on people and specifically MCC priority protected characteristics have been identified.

## **7. Future opportunities, Risks and policy considerations**

- 7.1 As development continues across the city, this may lead to increased growth pressures for Neighbourhood Services as the number of households grows significantly. There is some funding proposed within the current budget proposals for both waste collection and street cleansing, but the increase demand is likely to also extend to enforcement, parks, leisure and wider neighbourhood working.
- 7.2. The Target Operating Model for delivering services on a Neighbourhood footprint is being reviewed along with options for further integration of neighbourhood-based functions across the Council, particularly working with adult services and health. It is anticipated that this will generate savings for others rather than within the Neighbourhoods Directorate and this will be considered as part of future budget rounds.