

Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 3 March 2020

Present:

Councillor Russell (Chair) – in the Chair

Councillors Ahmed Ali, Andrews, Clay, Davies, B Priest, Rowles, A Simcock, Stanton, Wheeler and Wright

Also present:

Councillor Ollerhead, Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

Apologies: Councillors Lanchbury and Moore

RGSC/20/20 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2020 as a correct record.

RGSC/20/21 Evaluation of the Our Manchester approach

The Committee considered a report and presentation of the Director of Policy, Performance and Reform that provided an evaluation of the Our Manchester approach, including how Our Manchester was helping to deliver the required Council savings targets. This report sought to illustrate what progress to date had been made, through the supporting Our Manchester Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

The Strategic Lead for Intelligence and Data Science referred to the main points and themes within the report, which included: -

- Describing what the Evaluation Framework had delivered;
- Information on the Bringing Services Together for People in Places (BSTPIP) programme;
- The approach to monitoring and evaluating BSTPIP and next steps;
- Information on a range of work streams;
- Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Case studies;
- Information on the Our Manchester Investment fund (OMIF);
- Workforce training, and culture, to embed the Our Manchester behaviours in everything we do;
- Communications and Engagement; and
- Analysis of the impact of Our Manchester in delivering Council Savings.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committees discussions were: -

- What was the difference between the OMIF and the Neighbourhood Investment Fund;

- How was resident feedback captured and measured to enable the benchmarking of satisfaction with neighbourhoods;
- How would Members be informed of resident engagement events;
- How were the priorities for respective wards, as referred to within the report, identified;
- Whilst recognising the positive outcomes for individuals and the challenge in quantifying those outcomes, the report did not provide the Committee with sufficient detail on financial investment and savings achieved to effectively scrutinise;
- Was Our Manchester a strategy or a branding exercise, noting that resident voluntary work and community projects had existed prior to the introduction of Our Manchester;
- Acknowledging the improvements in providing health and social care services in multidisciplinary teams at a neighbourhood level, however the anticipated financial savings were not realised;
- Greater Manchester Police (GMP) were working towards consistent Neighbourhood footprints but were not yet fully aligned operationally;
- Had staff absenteeism improved as a result of the introduction of Our Manchester; and
- All Members should undertake the Our Manchester Experience training.

The Director of Policy, Performance and Reform informed the Committee that the Our Manchester Investment Fund was additional funding that allowed for the scaling up of those resident projects that demonstrated Our Manchester values and were sustainable. He commented that once established they could apply for future funding for projects through the Neighbourhood Investment Fund.

He stated that the Our Manchester approach involved fundamentally changing how the Council and partners worked across the city and the relationships with residents and communities, in order to deliver the Our Manchester Strategy for the city. The approach therefore needed to become embedded in everything that we do.

On BST PIP, he further stated that partners, including GMP were committed to aligning themselves to the neighbourhood model, however due to issues with their IT systems GMP had not operationally aligned to this service model as yet.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer commented that it was important to understand the report in the context of a reduction in staffing resources experienced by both the Council and partners, however the ambition was to deliver and improve services to the residents of Manchester despite this. She further commented that feedback from staff had indicated that they welcomed the opportunities to engage in voluntary work to support local communities.

The Strategic Lead for Intelligence and Data Science stated that positive outcomes had been delivered for residents by staff by adopting the Our Manchester approach. He stated that this had been supported by staff attending with the Our Manchester Experience that had challenged staff to consider how they worked and the behaviours they exhibited.

The Strategic Lead for Intelligence and Data Science informed the Committee that the resident survey was an online portal, available on the Council's website that residents could complete and this tool was one of the methods for capturing this information. In response to comments from the Committee who stated that they were unaware of this survey, Officers stated that information on this would be circulated to Members following the meeting.

In response to the priorities identified within different wards, the Director of Policy, Performance and Reform stated that these were the product of a number of different services, including Council services, housing providers and police who were working in multidisciplinary teams in neighbourhoods. He stated that these were very early days in the model of working and Members would be informed of their progress via ward coordination meetings. In response to specific ward related enquiries from Members he stated that he would discuss those outside of the meeting.

The Director of Policy, Performance and Reform acknowledged the comments regarding the financial reporting of this activity and this would be provided in future update reports. He stated that the largest investment in this programme was in the staff and this impacted on all the services the Council delivered which presented a challenge when evaluating or providing numerical outcomes and comparisons. He further added that consideration would also be given to including additional case studies to illustrate this work in future reporting, which the Chair welcomed. He further stated that the comments relating to staff absenteeism and Our Manchester Member training and information would also be included in future update reports.

A Member further commented that consideration needed to be given to the language and terminology used throughout the report and how the information was presented. She further recommended that a future update report include information and examples of those teams applying statutory duties, such as enforcement officers and benefit officers to illustrate how they were responding to the Our Manchester approach way of working with both residents and other services.

The Director of Policy, Performance and Reform provided examples of how officers working in statutory services were encouraged to engage in different conversations when interacting with residents. The Chair requested that any future update reports include data on the numbers of staff having undertaken the Our Manchester Experience. The Director of Policy, Performance and Reform informed the Members that the Experience had been refreshed and described the intention was to deliver this to staff who, for various reasons were unable to attend the Castlefield location with the intention of having 7,000 staff having undertaken this by the end of March 2021 (3,000 staff within the next twelve months) and Directorates were encouraged to prioritise those staff attending these events.

Decision

The Committee notes the report.

RGSC/20/22 Our Transformation Programme - progress update

The Committee considered a report and presentation of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer and City Solicitor that provided an overview of recent progress on the Our Transformation Programme and next steps.

The main points and themes within the report included: -

- Describing that Our Transformation was the work to modernise and digitise how the council operated;
- Providing an overview of the strategic context of Our Transformation;
- Providing an overview of the five programmes which together made up Our Transformation;
- Providing an overview of the how Our Transformation was resources; and
- Further detail on each of the programmes.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committees discussions were: -

- How were residents involved with the programme, in particular the design and development of digital processes, commenting that not all residents had access to digital services;
- Expressing concern that some services were digital only and this could contribute to digital exclusion;
- Making reference to a positive experience that included accurate and timely information when applying online to renew a passport, and could a similar model be implemented in Manchester;
- Was there any conflict between empowering officers to take decisions and reduce bureaucracy and statutory requirements;
- Was the resourcing of the programme sufficient to deliver the work and ambitions described;
- What was being done to support staff through technological and system changes; and
- How was carbon reduction being addressed through this activity.

The Strategic Lead, Business Change stated that the reference to digital that the Member had referred to was specifically describing the activities to modernise, streamline and digitise how the council operated and communicated across a range of internal systems and services. She described that as this project progressed residents would be consulted with via existing channels such as resident forums and staff in Neighbourhood Teams. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer stated that all channels of resident communication and access to the Council were important and this was recognised and that the work initially was looking that the internal CRM (Customer relationship management) system.

The Director of Policy, Performance and Reform acknowledged the experience of the Member when applying for his passport and stated that examples and systems of good practice were being considered, however he noted that the UK Government had invested significantly into the online digital passport service. The Strategic Lead, Business Change informed the Committee that work was ongoing to address digital inclusion, including work to support older residents and hard to reach groups and information on this work would be provided to the Committee following the meeting.

The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer provided an example of empowering officers to take decisions by explain that currently the arrangements were that she would have to sign off any honoraria payments. She stated that whilst this was appropriate for complex applications, managers should be enabled to make local decisions and be accountable for standard applications. She stated that this would also contribute to decisions being taken in a timely manner. The Strategic Lead, Business Change qualified the report by confirming that decision taking would still be in accordance with the Council's constitution and the agreed scheme of delegation to ensure that the decision making process were safe and legal. The Director of Policy, Performance and Reform further commented that the City's Climate Change Plan had a specific action to review all of the Council's decision-making processes and policies to ensure carbon zero was embedded throughout. He stated this would be included in the carbon literacy training that would be rolled out to all staff.

The Strategic Lead, Business Change commented that to achieve the full breadth of work described, additional resources would be identified to deliver projects, such as support for the roll out of Microsoft 365. She said they were mindful to avoid the need to recruit external consultants and to utilise the existing workforce, recognising the challenge this would present and this continued to be reviewed by the Our Transformation Board, Chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer with representatives from a range of services. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer stated that the delivery of this this programme of work was a priority and the Senior Management Team were committed to delivering this.

In regard to the roll out of Microsoft 365, the Strategic Lead, Business Change stated that a migration plan would be produced, with the roll out commencing in April 2020 to be completed by September 2020. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer stated that a new Director of ICT was now in post to deliver this project and this would be supported by the Change Team and staff from Microsoft.

In response to a comment from the Chair regarding the dangers of change fatigue experienced by staff and what support was being offered to staff, the Strategic Lead, Business Change stated they were mindful of this and all changes were being implemented 'with' staff rather than 'to' staff, and where possible changes to systems were being coordinated so they were rolled out at the same time and managed appropriately. The Chair requested that the Committee's gratitude was relayed to all staff involved.

In response to a specific question the Strategic Lead, Business Change stated that Time Wise was a flexible working accreditation and Wyse Terminals were the units to enable staff to access the Council's IT systems as opposed to a laptop or desk top computer.

Decision

The Committee notes the report.

RGSC/20/23 Policy and Performance Priorities

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Policy, Performance and Reform (PPR) that provided information on the priorities and performance of the

Council's Policy, Performance and Reform department for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

The main points and themes within the report included: -

- Providing a background and context to PPR;
- A structure chart;
- Describing the ambitions and priorities for PPR;
- Information on the City Policy Service;
- Information on resources and programmes;
- An update on the activities of the Policy and Partnerships team;
- Information on Reform and Innovation;
- The vision for Performance, Research and Intelligence;
- An update on the activities and vision of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team; and
- Equalities performance management.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committees discussions were: -

- Further clarification was sought on the statements contained within the report that described Manchester as a particularly difficult city to enumerate;
- Did the team have enough capacity to undertake the enumeration;
- Was the Residential Development Tracker and the Commercial Development Tracker available at a ward level and was this available to Councillors;
- What plans were in place to deliver the Windrush day;
- More resources were required to implement Green and Blue Infrastructure and what was being done to secure external funding to deliver climate change activities;
- Were the number of upheld Ombudsmen complaints comparable with other core cities; and
- What was the approach to utilising the services of external agencies to deliver consultations.

Officers described that work was ongoing so that the data used to produce the reports was aligned to the methodology of the ONS (Officer for National Statistics) and additional resources had been identified to support the national census work and due to the challenges in Manchester, including the nature of the housing stock and migration, the Chief Executive was currently in discussions with the ONS to ensure the appropriate number of enumerators were available in Manchester to deliver this work. Members noted that it was anticipated that, if carried out with appropriate resource, the Census would show Manchester's population was much higher than projected by ONS. Members commented that this could impact on Local Government funding allocations and requested that a briefing note was circulated to Members on this issue. The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer stated that population data was also a factor when Local Government funding was calculated, adding that this was also a factor for health service funding.

The Committee was informed that the Residential Development Tracker and the Commercial Development Tracker was an analysts tool and was not available in the current format for public consumption, however the outcomes were reported into

other sources of data and information that was provided to Members, such as budget forecasting.

In response to the specific question on Windrush day, Officers described that Local Authorities could apply for a fund from the Government to deliver such events and Manchester had submitted a bid and had prepared a delivery plan in anticipation of an award. Members were advised that the nature of the event would be determined by the scale of any funding awarded.

Officers described that the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, that included activities around tree and hedge planting was being considered at the relevant Scrutiny Committee that week prior to its submission to Executive. Members were informed that the Council was working with partners, including Transport for Greater Manchester to progress the actions to mitigate climate change. The Committee were also advised that officers within the Resources and Programmes team were actively investigating alternative sources of funding to progress climate change activities.

In respect to Ombudsmen complaints the Committee was informed that the Corporate Complaints Team would monitor and report on this activity, adding that targets were established.

In regard to Equalities and the 'Excellent' status of accreditation, Members were advised that work was ongoing to understand the options to ensure this status was retained in 2021. A Member suggested that consideration should be given to work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to ensure preparations for 2021 were appropriate.

In response to discussion on consultations and the use of external agencies, officers stated that consideration would be given as to the scale of the required consultation and any technical requirements that were required and a corporate commissioning framework was established to appoint consultants when required.

Decision

The Committee notes the report.

RGSC/20/24 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 approves the work programme.