

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**10 JULY 2024**

### **PRESENT**

Councillor F. Hornby (in the Chair).

Councillors M.J. Taylor (Vice-Chair), J.M. Axford, G. Coggins, F. Cosby, W. Frass, K Glenton, B. Hartley, W. Jones and D. Butt (ex-Officio)

#### In attendance

Councillor Tom Ross	Leader of the Council
Councillor Stephen Adshead	Executive Member for Highways, Environmental and Traded Services
Sara Saleh	Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Strategy and Resources
Adrian Fisher	Director of Growth and Regulatory Services
Dominique Sykes	Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Harry Callaghan	Democratic Officer

### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. Jarman, S. Thomas and D. Western

#### **32. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE 2024/25**

RESOLVED: That the membership of the Committee be noted.

#### **33. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE 2024/25**

RESOLVED: That the Committee Terms of Reference be noted.

#### **34. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024 be agreed as an accurate record.

#### **35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

#### **36. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No questions were received.

**37. EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO ACCESS TO COUNCIL SERVICES SCRUTINY REPORT**

[Note: Due to officer availability, agenda item 10 was moved up the agenda, with all other items following in the same order, as set out in the agenda]

The Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Strategy and Resources introduced the report on behalf of the Executive Member for Finance, Change and Governance who was unable to attend. There had been acknowledgement from all Council services that residents needed to be able to contact the Council as easily as possible. The Committee were informed that the Council was taking a digital first approach, however, the other approaches to contact were also being considered.

The Corporate Director referred to section three of the report which outlined the Council's aims to enhance the contact services within the Council. It was the intention that these were to come to fruition in 2024/25, with some coming in in 2026. Members' attention was drawn to the several activities already underway and outlined in the report. The expectation was that this would create a more accessible and advanced system, whether that be through the contact centre, email, or webforms.

Councillor Hartley enquired as to how the Committee and Council measures the success of the new processes. Councillor Hartley asked whether this would include data and a published service standard. The Corporate Director of Strategy and Resources responded that in previous discussions with Scrutiny, certain areas of the Council already had service-level agreements (SLAs) in place. The Corporate Director did however highlight that difficulty did come from when the service did not have a customer relationship management system (CRM), that would allow the Council to track traffic in and out of the Council services. The Corporate Director reassured the Committee that assurances would continue to be given to Scrutiny and the relevant Executive Members through those SLA agreements.

Councillor Jones referred to section 3.4 of the report, saying that a new content management system (CMS) would be implemented "by during 2025", asking whether this meant by 2025 or at some point in the year. The Corporate Director of Strategy and Resource confirmed that this was during 2025.

Councillor Axford raised concern about phone numbers not being available on the website, and felt it was important that as part of this work, phone numbers for different services were made available.

Councillor Frass felt the original purpose of the Scrutiny work was to look at the quick wins and asked if a breakdown of the quick wins was possible. Councillor Frass was, however, glad to see that the report had identified a bigger piece of work was required. The Corporate Director of Strategy and Resource responded that whilst things might appear as quick wins, they were often not as simple as that. However, in reference to section three of the report, the Corporate Director

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hoped that this showed that much of the work requested as quick wins, was already underway.

The Corporate Director suggested returning in 12-months' time to Scrutiny, giving an update on how the work had progressed and sharing the journey services had been on. The Chair agreed with this suggestion.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That Scrutiny note the Executive response.
- 2) That the Executive Member for Finance, Change and Governance and / or Corporate Director of Strategy and Resources provide a further progress report to the Scrutiny meeting in July 2025.

**38. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES AND CORPORATE PLAN 2024/27**

The Leader of the Council provided a summary overview of the presentation shared with the agenda. The previous Corporate Plan was running out in 2024 and the Leader outlined the former priorities which formed this plan. Following the issues caused by the pandemic, the Leader felt it pertinent to refresh and have a new plan which looked to the future. The new Corporate Plan now included five priorities, with two additional priorities added to the three from the former plan.

The first of these, providing the best start for children and young people, had been formed, in part, due to the impact felt by young people during the pandemic. The Leader felt that the youngest members of the Borough had given up the greatest sacrifice during the pandemic and were met with significant uncertainty growing up. The second new priority, the Leader outlined, was to celebrate the cultural power of the Borough of Trafford. The Leader highlighted the rich heritage within the borough, with several streams of work possible for the Council to operate as a key stakeholder.

The Leader noted the 'we wills' that sat behind each priority, adding that one additional 'we will' had been added to the children and young people priority, which was including the voice of the child.

Added further, the Leader recognised the journey the new Corporate Plan had been on, starting in Summer 2023, hoping that it would be signed off at the Council meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> July. Concluding, the Leader was pleased to recognise the consultation process, which had returned 77% of residents who responded, either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the priorities set out.

The Chair was pleased to see such a strong consensus to the plan and asked how the Council planned to assess and monitor the progress of the Corporate Plan. The Leader of the Council responded that the Council was looking to reflect the things that were within its control. Periodical updates were to come to the Executive on the performance of the plan, with a RAG rating being used to rate performance against the targets set.

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Councillor Axford felt the plan was good and very clear. Councillor Axford was unsure how the Council could measure whether residents were happy, and asked how it would be. Councillor Axford was glad to see the culture, sport, and heritage priority. Finally, on climate change, Councillor Axford felt there was too much focus on 'greening' Trafford Park, suggesting that housing and transport emissions too, need to be looked at. Councillor Axford also felt there was too much focus on adaptation in the climate crisis priority, and felt the Council needed to be proactive rather than reactive.

The Leader recognised that there may be better ways of measuring wellbeing rather than the word happy, however, stressed that the Council wanted to ensure that people enjoyed living in the Borough, making wellbeing crucial to what the Council did.

On 'greening' Trafford Park, the Leader of the Council highlighted the difference of Trafford to other boroughs in Greater Manchester (GM), due to a significant level of the emissions coming from Trafford Park. The Leader recognised the importance of housing and other infrastructure yet felt that due to the significant emissions contribution of Trafford Park, it had to be prioritised.

Regarding adaptations, the Leader agreed the Council needed to become more proactive, however, due to the impact of the climate crisis on Victorian infrastructure in the Borough it resulted in the Council being more reactive. Looking for the future, the Leader added that things such as the design guide and the truly affordable net zero narrative coming out of GM, would create opportunities for the Council to be more proactive.

Councillor Axford followed up by asking where information on what the Council was doing on youth provision could be found. Councillor Axford also asked whether Mental Health could be included in the healthy and independent lives priority.

On mental health, the Leader said this could be taken away. Regarding youth provision, the Leader highlighted the children and young people's strategy which would be coming within the Municipal year. The Leader also referred Members to the youth service set up by the administration early on.

Councillor Hartley liked how the new priorities were positive and aspirational. Councillor Hartley queried the thinking around not having addressing poverty and destitution as a priority, as it had previously been and whether this was a change in focus from the Council or just a change in presentation. The Leader reassured Members that tackling poverty remained of significant importance to the authority. It was hoped that each priority addressed the issue individually. The Leader referred to the children's, housing, and healthy lives priorities, and how these each made efforts to address poverty. A focus on 'for everyone' was the central thread throughout the five priorities, so the Leader felt this showed the plan wanted to break down barriers, so that people could enjoy and have access to all opportunities across Trafford.

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Councillor Coggins referred to the flower diagram on slide seven of the presentation, suggesting that four of the priorities were a priority the Council was trying to achieve, whereas the climate crisis was an action and whether this was intentional, suggesting that if so, addressing was too gentle. Councillor Coggins added further that whilst recognising that the intention was there, she did not see inclusion and celebrating diversity within the priorities. The Leader of the Council felt comfortable about the climate crisis wording and had been agreed upon by the Executive and senior officers. On cohesion, the Leader felt this came through in each of the five priorities, such as building cohesion through culture, where the Leader referred to the new Director of Cultural Transformation. The Leader concluded by reassuring Members that these were five strategic priorities, which did not mean that other areas the Council had focused on were being dropped.

Regarding priority three, Councillor Hartley referred to final 'we will' which ensured accessibility for all by improving highways, streetlighting, footpaths and resurfacing, asking whether the administration was in a place to change anything on this approach or was it a statement of continuation. The Leader responded that there was significant work going on with accessible junctions in the Borough. The Leader recognised that issues such as pavement parking and width of pavements needed to be investigated. It was confirmed that work with partners from One Trafford and Transport for Greater Manchester would be taking place.

Councillor Coggins referred to the language in priority one and four, specifically the use of encouraging and promoting, highlighting discussions which had taken place in Public Health which had suggested that people know what they should be doing and rather should be being empowered, informed and supported. The Leader took the point and highlighted how he was proud of the Public Health team in Trafford, specifically their work on vaping with children and young people. As such, the Leader felt confident in the officers to support the Administration with what they would like to achieve.

Councillor Coggins finally referred to priority four and, similarly to Councillor Axford, felt there was a lot of talk about businesses, and less so around residents and housing energy. The Leader of the Council referred to the new five-year environment plan coming from Greater Manchester, which would be looking at what the wider population could do to support climate change over the next five years as well as the behaviour of the population. The Leader highlighted how the 'we wills' in the presentation were areas which were controllable by Trafford, with bigger projects coming at the GM level.

Councillor Axford saw the poverty point differently to Councillors Hartley and Coggins and felt that poverty was underlying in each of the priorities and took a positive slant throughout the presentation.

The Chair thanked the Leader of the Council for attending the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the presentation and update be noted.

**39. CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW 2024**

The Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer provided a brief summary of the report from the Constitutional Working Group (CWG) with the objective being to improve the quality of debate at the Council meetings. The Committee were referred to section five of the report where the Constitutional amendments had been laid out. The Committee were also informed that the report had been to Standards Committee, who had agreed to the recommendations in section 6.3, and suggested one further recommendation in section 6.4 of the report. The Director added that point two of these recommendations had already been agreed by the CWG, with point two also expected to be accepted. The Committee were asked to agree the recommendations as set out by the CWG, as well as the additional one from Standards.

The Chair felt the Council meetings did need this piece of work undertaking and thanked the CWG for doing so.

Councillor Axford questioned why questions from Councillors even came to Council meeting and was more concerned that the meeting did not include questions from the Public. Regarding petitions, Councillor Axford asked whether residents could be assured that these would be publicised the same as if they were going to full Council. Finally, Councillor Axford asked whether it was discussed to limit the number of speeches during Motions.

Regarding questions, the Director responded that it had been discussed during a previous review, which felt that it brought transparency and was appropriate. It had been discussed by the CWG; however, it was felt that questions remained appropriate, with the first measure being to control the number of questions asked at the meetings. In terms of petitions, the Director and Monitoring Officer confirmed that the petition scheme procedure would be carried over, with every party being notified of petitions to ensure Members can attend the Executive if they would like. Several different options were considered around controlling the meeting, accepting that 30 second speeches were not effective, with the Director of Legal and Governance confirming that the recommendations were where the group had landed on this, with the intention that it would be reviewed in six months.

Councillor Coggins noted that the report was not circulated to the CWG before it was published. Councillor Coggins also noted that the moving of petitions and limiting of questions was to give more time for speeches. However, Councillor Coggins added that there was discussion that questions were being limited due to the number of questions related to casework and felt this had not come through in the report and asked if it could be added. The Director of Legal and Governance confirmed the report had not gone back to the CWG, however, the final recommendations had been shared. The Director recognised that the issue of casework questions had been acknowledged, with a discussion had about looking at the question and using a criterion to determine whether the question was

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suitable. However, it was agreed that it would not be fair on officers to make that decision, and as such agreed to limit the number of questions instead.

Councillor Coggins referred to section 5.3c which put a time limit and an order in which questions were asked and felt that this could limit the ability for the Green Party to ask questions. Councillor Coggins also noted that Standards was putting a limit of two questions per group and felt the time limit would be insufficient if each group made use of these. It was suggested that it could be changed to each group having answers to their first question, and then going back to the start for the second questions. The Chair agreed this was a valid point. The Director of Legal and Governance responded this could be taken back as a recommendation from Scrutiny. It had been suggested by Councillor Frass in Standards, however, it was agreed that with questions moving straight to supplementary, there would be sufficient time. The Chair asked if it could be reviewed following a trial process. The Director confirmed that there was a six-month review process.

Councillor Frass responded that he did discuss Councillor Coggins' point during Standards and felt the Director had suggested that it might be difficult to monitor this if there was a variable number of questions from different groups. However, Councillor Frass suggested that if the number of questions was fixed, whether it would be a more straightforward recommendation.

On casework questions, Councillor Frass felt it was opposition group responsibility to represent the electorate with the emphasis being on Councillors to put on record the concerns of residents. Councillor Frass added that there was support at Standards not to limit topic of the questions that came, with casework questions often coming as a last resort.

Councillor Frass asked if there were any scope in formalising, tracking, and monitoring motions. Referring to Oldham Council, Councillor Frass asked if an annual report could be brought to a Committee to consider what had been achieved. The Director of Legal and Governance confirmed that a piece of work looking at how the Council sets up a motion tracker was underway. This wanted to ensure the validity of a motion, what areas had recently been considered, and to be able to follow up and provide a transparency on what action had been taken for all motions.

Councillor Hartley asked whether the Council was aware of which parts of the Council meeting was of most interest to the public and whether the CWG had any input from the public. Councillor Hartley raised his frustration with casework questions, however, felt the public might value that more as the function of Council. Councillor Hartley asked if there was any consideration of a written question procedure from Members rather than taking time at full Council.

The Director of Legal and Governance considered it possible that during the 6-month review, the interest levels could be monitored. The Director added further that the CWG consensus was that questions were valuable, but a time limit was needed. Regarding written question procedure, the Director informed the Committee that as part of the report which was to go forward to Council would

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include timescales. This would lead to all deadlines being moved forward and standard practice becoming that the first Member question is responded to prior to the meeting, moving straight to the supplementary. Over the six months, the supplementary response timeframe would be monitored.

Councillor Coggins referred to section 5.3c.3, placing order of parties on Political balance, suggesting that this should not be in the Constitution due to possible resignations or defections. The Director of Legal and Governance responded that this had been picked up, amended, and accepted by the CWG.

Councillor Taylor asked whether petitions moving to the Executive would still involve all cross-party Members being notified. The Director of Legal and Governance confirmed that it would.

Councillor Frass asked if the Committee wanted to refer back to the CWG the recommendation of having all parties receiving responses to their first question, in order of political balance, followed by second questions.

The Director of Legal and Governance suggested to start by taking a decision on the recommendations offered by the CWG, then on the Standards Committee recommendation. This could then be followed by Scrutiny putting forward its own recommendation.

The Chair moved to agree the CWG and Standards recommendations. These were both supported by the Committee. The Chair then asked what recommendation Scrutiny would like to make. The Director asked that any changes to the order of questions be kept to political party and balance.

Councillor Coggins injected that they felt the Green group would still be disadvantaged to having their second question answered, however, accepted that the recommendation provided a better opportunity for the group to have their first questions answered.

A discussion was then had between the Committee around the most appropriate amendment, and with support from the Director it was agreed that each group should have two questions, with each having a response to a first question in political balance order, then following that same order with the second questions. In the current make up of the Council this would mean; Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Green, followed by the second questions in the same order. This was agreed by the Committee.

**RESOLVED**

- 1) That the Scrutiny Committee agreed the recommended Constitutional Working Group changes, as laid out in the report.
- 2) That the Scrutiny Committee agreed the additional amendment from Standards Committee, as laid out in the report.
- 3) That the Scrutiny Committee recommend to Council that the constitutional changes be approved.
- 4) That the Scrutiny Committee recommends that in the first instance, the Mayor shall invite each political group, in order of

political balance, to ask a supplementary question to their original question and only after all political group have been invited to ask a supplementary question on their original question, shall the Mayor invite the groups to ask a supplementary to their original second question, again in political balance.

**40. EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO THE EVENTS AT OLD TRAFFORD TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

The Executive Member for Highways, Environmental and Traded Services, Councillor Stephen Adshead, introduced the report and thanked former Councillor Walsh who chaired the task and finish group. The Executive Member was glad to see the report and hoped it showed how the Council was working with Manchester United to limit the impact of matchdays on local residents. The Executive Member shared the frustrations of matchday parking, and the limits the Council had on penalising those who park inappropriately. It was highlighted how the introduction of red routes aimed to give the Council greater power to deal with those that chose to park illegally. Before handing over, the Executive Member highlighted his desire to work closer with Manchester United under their new ownership and supporting them in building a strategy through any redevelopment in the area to support the residents.

The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services provided updates to the responses within the report. This included scheduled implementation of red routes around the ground in August; positive approaches from the Trafford Centre following a meeting to discuss how it could be used on matchdays; several ongoing workstreams with Transport for Greater Manchester, with the refresh of the overarching Transport 2040 strategy; and working closely with the football club and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) in the new season.

The Chair reported positive reception from residents in the Ward. The Chair asked what the reception from Manchester United (MUFC) had been to the report. The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services confirmed the report had been shared with MUFC, however, there had not been a formal response yet. Generally speaking, the Director felt the club had highlighted their commitment to working on a number of the issues highlighted.

Councillor Hartley felt redevelopment of the stadium provided an opportunity and highlighted the lack of rail station access to the ground. Councillor Hartley asked whether any redevelopments of the ground would include the opportunity to improve rail access. The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services confirmed that it was within the Wharfside plan to address the issues of rail access. The Executive Member confirmed that during discussions on the redevelopment of the ground, there would be consideration to rail access.

Councillor Hartley agreed with increased cycle parking, however, felt access to better cycle routes were required to increase its usage. Councillor Hartley added

that it was difficult to walk to Old Trafford and asked whether there were plans to publicise walking routes to the ground. The Director confirmed that TfGM did have designated walking routes. This would also be included with the ongoing extensive active travel programmes and within the Civic quarter action plan to make greater use of Warwick Road as a processional way.

Councillor Axford asked whether use of the Metrolink had been looked at and felt the news on trains and greater tram provision was positive. The Executive Member confirmed that the Metrolink was well used for matchday travel, with many fans also walking to the Didsbury line to spread the number of people on the tram network.

The Chair had heard from residents that the shuttle bus programme had been dropped by TfGM and asked if there was an update on this. The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services recognised that this was an issue that TfGM was grappling with, however, confirmed that any approach would be consistent with that taken at other stadiums.

Councillor Coggins referred to section 3.13 of the report around reforming the group relative to parking and traffic management, asking whether it could be resurrected at some point to deal with broader issues. The Chair felt traffic was being considered first due to it being of most concern.

Councillor Coggins felt the modal shift work was unambitious, with it not making use of empty parking spaces which often go unused. The Executive Member responded that once redevelopment began this would not be the case. Councillor Coggins also referred to the red routes, adding that enforcement would only be along those routes and did not address the issue of kerbside parking. The Chair asked whether the red routes were monitored by cameras. The Executive Member confirmed that there were cameras along the network.

RESOLVED: That Scrutiny noted the Executive response.

#### **41. REDUCING CAR DEPENDENCY TASK AND FINISH GROUP DRAFT REPORT**

Councillor Axford presented the report as the Chair and, on behalf of, the Task and Finish group looking at Reducing Car Dependency. Councillor Axford outlined the key justifications around reducing car dependency, provided data from surveys of Members of the Public, and highlighted the meetings with Local Authorities, Transport for Greater Manchester, and Dame Sarah Storey (Active Travel Commissioner), which had informed the report as set out in the agenda. Councillor Axford concluded that the group felt Trafford would benefit from a strategic overarching approach to join up the good work already taking place and suggested the strategy, Healthy Living Streets for All, which would encourage a modal shift, play a leading role in tackling the climate crisis, make greater use of public transport, enable more children to walk, wheel or cycle to school, as well as further suggestions made by the group and laid out in the report.

The Chair thanked Councillor Axford and praised the report. The Chair liked the idea of a campaign to raise awareness for drivers who must park on pavements to allow space for pedestrians, as well as the suggestion of planting wildflowers along road verges.

Councillor Jones asked if any consultation took place during the writing of the report. Councillor Axford responded that there was not, but it would need to be part of the next stage with any of the recommendations that the Executive take forward.

RESOLVED: That the Scrutiny Committee endorses the report to go to the Executive.

#### **42. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25**

Councillor Taylor asked whether the Committee could look at permits for NHS workers to remove the risk of receiving fines for parking when in the community. The Chair said that if it was to be considered it would be expanded to look at all key workers.

Councillor Frass highlighted the work programming meeting which had taken place, referring to tranche three of the Bee Network and transport as one meeting. The Chair asked for suggestions to be made in the meeting, which would then all be taken away, prioritised, and put into a more formal work programme. This would be done in a further work programme meeting with the Chair, Vice-Chair, Governance Manager, and Democratic Officer.

Councillor Jones raised transparency around the One Trafford traffic department, looking at how they assess and complete work.

Councillor Frass agreed with the item. Councillor Frass referred to conversations around scaling back the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) item, rather having a split session, half looking at HIAMP and the other on public facing infrastructure issues such as those laid out by Councillor Jones.

Councillor Hartley added that the meeting could be on HIAMP and investments in roads, with another item looking at highway's maintenance.

Councillor Frass referred to the work programming meeting, and outlined how inviting back the social housing representatives, this would include only the bigger housing providers to have a response on damp and mould. Then, move the conversation on to look possibly at void policies and repairs.

RESOLVED: That the above suggestions be considered by the Chair and Vice-Chair.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and finished at 8.28 pm