

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 JANUARY 2022

PRESENT

Councillor D. Acton (in the Chair).

Councillors R. Chilton (Vice-Chair), J.M. Axford, D. Butt, G. Carter, L. Dagnall, J.D. Newgrosh, R. Thompson and B.G. Winstanley

In attendance

Councillor Wright	Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration
Adrian Fisher	Director of Growth and Regulatory Services
Caroline Siddall	Housing Strategy and Growth Manager
Alexander Murray	Governance Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Mirza, K. Procter, Dr. K. Barclay, and D. Western

25. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held 10 November 2021 be agreed as an accurate record.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

27. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Chair informed the Committee that some questions had been received from a Member of the Public in relation to ACM cladding which were directed to Trafford Housing Trust. The questions were to be passed on to Trafford Housing Trust to provide a response.

RESOLVED: That the questions be passed onto Trafford Housing Trust to provide a response.

28. HOMELESSNESS IN TRAFFORD

The Housing Strategy and Growth Manager went over the set of data for quarter 3 that had been circulated as part of the agenda and provided updates where new information was available. The update covered the average length of stay in B&Bs in Trafford and the number of people Trafford placed outside of borough. The Housing Strategy and Growth Manager added that she would send the updated data set to the Committee after the meeting.

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Following the update, the Housing Strategy and Growth Manager offered to provide the Committee with training around Homelessness services and for Committee Members to visit and shadow members of the team.

Councillor Chilton asked whether support was being provided to those placed at the Ambelhurst. The Housing Strategy and Growth Manager Confirmed that welfare visits were being held and the feedback from those visits was that support was being provided by Manchester City Council.

Councillor Carter asked if comparators could be provided with the data to enable the Committee to compare performance year by year. The Housing Strategy and Growth Manager responded that the requested information would be provided going forwards.

Councillor Butt asked what the average cost of placing a homeless person in Trafford was. The Housing Strategy and Growth Manager responded that the price varied to place them in B&Bs, but the average was around £66. The cost was much less if they were placed within a commissioned service. The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration then explained the commissioned provision Trafford had in place.

Councillor Winstanley confirmed that he would take up the offer to visit the Ambelhurst and encouraged the other Members to do so if they could.

Councillor Axford asked what the reason was for the item coming to Scrutiny. The Chair responded that the item had come up due to concerns raised about the possible rise in homelessness due to the pandemic and the resulting difficulties for the service.

Councillor Thompson asked whether the service collected data as to age and gender and whether any trends had been identified. The Housing Strategy and Growth Manager responded that there had not been an increase in women being homeless in Trafford, although this had been seen nationally. The Housing Strategy and Growth Manager added that the service had provided sets of data responding to questions and requests from the Committee. She then offered to provide a set of indicators on a regular basis along with historical data to be used so they could track any trends in the area.

Councillor Dagnall welcomed the offer by the Housing Strategy and Growth Manager and agreed it would be better to receive a regular data set on a regular basis instead of officers attending Committee meetings.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That a set of homelessness data be sent to the Committee on a regular basis.

29. ACM CLADDING

The Chair explained that due to an administrative error the letter which had been agreed to be sent to Trafford Housing Trust had not been circulated and so the item had been deferred so that they could address the issues raised within the letter.

RESOLVED: That the item be deferred to the Committee's next meeting.

30. CARRINGTON RELIEF ROAD

The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services went through the presentation that had been circulated with the agenda. The presentation covered the reason the Carrington relief road was needed, the benefits the road would bring to the area, the Councils general principals around transport, and where the Council wanted to be in the future. The Council did plan to increase active travel and public transport but highways would continue to play a part in the transport plans in the borough. The presentation covered the other transport routes and options within the area. The presentation also informed the Committee of the public engagement that had been undertaken around the relief road plans.

After all the alternatives were considered, the Executive were asked to choose between options A and F. Option F was the preferred option but there had been a discovery of peat along the proposed road and further assessment was being undertaken. The presentation concluded with a slide informing the Committee of the next steps within the strategic programme and with links to additional information.

Councillor Winstanley asked for additional clarification as to exactly where the favoured proposed route would be. The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services demonstrated the route on the map on slide 11 of the presentation and explained how it would connect into the existing infrastructure.

Councillor Thompson asked where the peat had been found and what would happen if it was found that there was a large amount there. The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services showed the general area where the peat had been found and explained that if a large amount of peat was found then it would impact the preferred route and alternatives would be sought.

Councillor Newgrosh asked a series of questions on why further inspections were not being done on the other route following the discovery of peat along the preferred route, which could lead to it no longer being viable. Councillor Newgrosh felt that the number of responses received was very low for a consultation on such an important piece of infrastructure and asked to look at how the consultation was communicated. Councillor Newgrosh also noted that the Greater Manchester aim was to reduce Traffic by 50% by 2040 and felt this plan was incongruous with that aim. Councillor Newgrosh's final point was he felt the programme was not bold enough and asked why the proposed new rail line was not being considered instead, as the long-term benefits would be so much greater.

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The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration responded by stating that the road programme would offer an improved route for existing residents in the area, which would help to assuage their concerns about the amount of development and the number of new homes and traffic this would bring into the area. The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration then provided the Committee with information as to the steps taken as part of the public consultation and the efforts made to get as high level of response as possible. Unfortunately, the low level of response received for this consultation was in line with standard level of feedback received from consultation exercises.

The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services explained the Council's approach to surveying options. He then went on to assure the Committee that the road was not the only transport development being done in the area and that the additional railway line was still under consideration by the Council and TFGM.

Councillor Dagnall asked for more information regarding the requirements for a new road. The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services stated that there were several planning applications that had detailed assessments, which showed the need to have an additional road in the area.

A series of additional questions were raised but did not receive answers during the meeting. The questions were to be captured and a response provided to the Committee after the meeting.

The Committee agreed that they wanted to consider this item further and the committee requested that a timeline for the stages of the programme be provided so they could select items to consider and scrutinise. The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services responded that a document with the timings for the next stages of the programme could be shared with the Committee at their next meeting to help them plan further Scrutiny.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the presentation be noted.
- 2) That the Carrington Relief Road be on the agenda of the next meeting of the Committee.

31. BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT

The Chair introduced the report and asked Members if they had any questions or comments.

Councillor Carter noted that answers had not been received to the questions relating interest rates and whether the Council had a fixed rate energy supply and asked that these be followed up.

Councillor Carter asked whether there had been any response to the request for additional savings options. The Governance Officer confirmed that no further proposals had been received.

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The Committee agreed the report for submission to the Executive.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted and recommendations agreed.
- 2) That the report be submitted to the Executive for a response.

32. WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Dagnall raised an issue about the presentations being provided to the Committee. She expressed that the presentation did not the Committee with adequate information to able to scrutinise items in sufficient depth.

Councillor Newgrosh had received several complaints about issues around damp and the general the state of buildings being let out in Trafford. Councillor Newgrosh asked if this was something to be considered by the Committee. The Committee agreed to add this as a future topic for the Committee.

Councillor Carter suggested looking at the expected increased demand in EV vehicle charging and what the Councils strategy was to meet this demand over the next ten years.

RESOLVED: That the suggested items be noted and added to the work programme.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and finished at 8.30 p.m.