

EXECUTIVE

18 SEPTEMBER 2023

PRESENT

Leader of the Council (Councillor Tom Ross), in the Chair.

Councillor C. Hynes	Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Leisure, Arts, Culture & Heritage
Councillor S. Adshead	Executive Member for Highways, Environmental & Traded Services / Labour Group Secretary
Councillor K.G. Carter	Executive Member for Children & Young People
Councillor J. Harding	Executive Member for Finance, Change & Governance
Councillor E. Patel	Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration
Councillor J. Slater	Executive Member for Health and Care
Councillor R. Thompson	Executive Member for Communities and Safety
Councillor A.J. Williams	Executive Member for Climate Change
Councillor J.A. Wright	Executive Member for Housing & Advice

Also present.

Councillors Butt, Chakraborty, Eckersley, Evans, Ennis, Frass, Holden, Newgrosh, Paul, and Welton.

In attendance

Sara Todd	Chief Executive
Sara Saleh	Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Strategy and Resources.
Richard Roe	Corporate Director of Place
Nathan Atkinson	Corporate Director of Adults and Wellbeing
Graeme Bentley	Director of Finance and Systems
Emma Malpas	Head of Governance and Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Pamela Wharton	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
Alexander Murray	Governance Officer

APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

23. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held 24th July 2023 be agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

24. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Question 1 - Mr Chris Boyes

I wish to place the following question before the September 18th Executive regarding Street Trading in Sale Town Centre.

Does the provision of a non-food pitch licence limit the size of the pitch and if so to what ground area, does it include or exclude the inclusion of space for the parking of an associated commercial vehicle (van) and if so to what area, and does it include or exclude the ability to extend the retail area taken to include part of the seating installed for the benefit and enjoyment of the public at large?

The Executive Member for Communities and Safety provided the following response.

“The proposals in the Policy are to ensure that street trading is conducted fairly; safely and in accordance with regulation; that it does not cause an obstruction of any street or danger to any persons using it; and does not cause nuisance or annoyance.

It is not proposed to have fixed pitch sizes (other than those already marked out around MUFC and the Lancashire County Cricket ground). When determining an application for a licence, officers will consider pitch size on a case-by-case basis taking into account the size of the unit, articles being sold, footfall, location and nature of the area. All trading activities would have to take place within the designated bay and any other associated tables/chairs etc. or commercial vehicles would not be permitted (similar to pitches near MUFC/LCCC).”

Question 2 - Mr Chris Boyes

I wish the following question to be put to the Executive concerning the 2023 tree Policy.

Given that it is proposed that in future the Street Tree Inspections will take place on a three yearly basis, that is considerably more frequently than has been the case for a number of years, please could the relevant Executive member advise by how many Full Time Equivalents the workforce to carry out these inspections will be increased to accommodate these improvements to service and at what cost?

The Executive Member for Highways, Environmental, and Traded Services provided the following response.

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“One extra full time tree officer has already been employed, to help implement the councils new 3-year tree safety inspection programme at a cost of 35k p.a. The council has also recently purchased a new tree management system called Ezytreev at a cost of 20k. The new system enables tree officers to capture inspection data at an increased rate compared to the old tree management system and hence will assist with ongoing inspections of our trees.”

Question 3 – Mr Chris Boyes

Given that in a Council Meeting last year an Executive member suggested that, to allow for wheelchair users and their carers, children’s buggies etc, the minimum clearance passageway on pavements from parked vehicles should be 1.8 metres please could an explanation be given as to why in the 2023 Tree Policy the suggested minimum allowance for new tree planting should be the lesser distance of 1.2 metres?

The Executive Member for Highways, Environmental, and Traded Services provided the following response.

“The reference of a minimum 1.8m footway width was considered in response to Trafford’s consideration of the 6 Living Streets recommendations for removing clutter and placement of new equipment at a previous council meeting. The Living Streets recommendation is suggested to be 1.5m unhindered in a number of circumstances hence Trafford will be striving to improve on this standard where possible on placement of new equipment such as bike hire, EV equipment, enforcement of A boards and other activities and have put in place a budget for removal of street clutter.

With regard to trees however, a large proportion of our existing trees and especially large mature trees are in footpaths that unfortunately do not offer the suggested clear footpaths widths of 1.8m even when a tree is subsequently removed and not replaced.

For a good number of years, the council has undertaken an annual tree removal and replacement programme, which highlights large mature trees impeding the footpaths for removal. These trees are then replaced on a 2 for 1 basis with small ornamental varieties more suitable for the highway and are often also placed at alternative sites in another location to allow improved access on very narrow footways.

The removal and replacement of trees in existing locations particularly on highway of older highway design standard has to consider the overall climate and environmental impact of those trees on a site-by-site basis.

The suggested footpath width by living streets therefore is 1.5metres unhindered. However, the legal minimum clear footpath width based on Highway and Rights of Way Legislation is required to be 1metre. Trafford is therefore suggesting 1.2metres clear footpath for trees after a new tree has been planted that should therefore assist with wheelchair and other mobility equipment that needs unhindered access.

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Whilst these standards are different to those recommended by the living streets declutter guidance for trees, Trafford will be striving to ensure that any placement of other new equipment or other activities impacting on the highway will be to the suggested minimum widths.

Retrospectively applying the 1.5m to our current tree lined streets would see a detrimental effect on the climate and environment in those streets and hence 1.2m is considered a fair compromise that still allows access given the design layout of Trafford's older streets."

Question 4 - submitted by Mr Andrew Gould (Secretary: Friends of Davyhulme Park)

As a member of Friends of Davyhulme Park I have a keen interest in the outcome of the 7-year review of the One Trafford contract.

For a number of years our group members have been active on the park, essentially getting involved in many the jobs that Amey were supposed to be doing such as weeding beds, clearing leaves, edging paths, cutting hedges, clearing ponds, litter picking etc.

We have been told that in future Amey's performance will be judged by park walkabouts but how will Amey be assessed when maintenance work is being performed partially by exasperated volunteers.

Additionally, how will the large majority of parks and green spaces who don't have an active 'Friends' group agree an appropriate SLA and be periodically assessed.

The Executive Member for Highways, Environmental, and Traded Services provided the following response.

"The majority of friends groups now have organised working voluntary days in parks on a regular structured basis, to underpin and support these efforts we are looking to introduce a service level agreement (SLA). We will be looking to work through the SLA with the Friends Groups on an ongoing basis at walking meetings and discuss how the SLA will be used going forward as a practical constructive tool in the managing of performance as whole.

Voluntary working days within our parks can also be a celebration of community bringing a wide range of benefits – this type of voluntary work lends itself perfectly for bringing people together to engage with horticulture – creating places of reflection and connection. At a site level, developing levels of understanding and working out the range of practical mechanism co-operation and joint decision-making does take time. The proposed SLA is looking to ensure effective working across the whole area of our parks, clearly defining which tasks should not be carried out by volunteers and developing alignment with both voluntary and grounds maintenance resources.

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We are also looking to extend the SLA to parks where we don't currently have friend groups established and will carry out similar walking meetings with officers who are tasked in delivering the service in these areas."

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the questions and responses be noted.
- 2) That full written responses be provided to the questioners and captured within the minutes of the meeting.

25. MATTERS FROM COUNCIL OR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (IF ANY)

Councillor Butt informed the Committee that the Health Scrutiny Committee formed a task and finish group on social prescriptions in Trafford. The Leader thanked Councillor Butt for the update and welcomed the outcome of the Committees work.

26. ONE TRAFFORD PARTNERSHIP 7 YEAR CONTRACT REVIEW OUTCOMES

The Executive Member for Highways, Environmental, and Traded Services introduced the report by providing an overview of the review that had been conducted over the previous two years. While the review had taken a large number of resources to conduct it had already delivered a number of improvements and efficiencies to services. The Executive Member went through the main areas of the review including refuse collection, green spaces, and de-carbonisation through the green based strategy. The Executive Member concluded his introduction by thanking the Highways manager and his team for all the work and engagement that they had undertaken as part of the review.

The Leader welcomed the report and seconded the Executive Member in thanking to the officers who worked on the review.

Executive Member for Climate Change noted that Members had previously had reservations about the partnership, its performance, and the delivery of services and the Scrutiny Committee had previously recommended to end the Contract. The Executive Member was assured by the work of the review that the contract was now fit for purpose and able to deliver services to Trafford residents.

The Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration also welcomed the outcomes of the review and the improvements that had already been seen. Noted that the green space strategy addressed a gap in the Council's approach and that the Friends of Parks Groups would welcome the clarity around responsibilities for maintenance laid out.

The Leader then opened the floor for questions and comments from other members in attendance. The Leader of the Opposition along with Members from each opposition party made a series of comments and asked a series of questions relating to the review. The comments made were broadly in support of the outcomes of the review and the questions covered a wide range of topics including refuse collection, grass cutting, membership of the Partnership Board, and the monitoring of the conditions of parks. Each question was given a detailed response by the Executive Member for Highways, Environmental and Traded

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Services and the Corporate Director of Place with each questioner being satisfied with the response received.

The Leader summed up the discussions and noted the large amount of work that the review represented and how it would lead to better communication and engagement and increase capital investment in the area. The Leader encouraged Members to go to the depot to view the improvements that had been made, especially around the refuse management systems. The Leader noted that there would be continued scrutiny of the service going forward and welcomed the scrutiny of Members to help ensure that the service continued to improve. The Leader then read out the recommendations of the report which were approved.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the position in relation to the negotiations conducted with Amey in accordance with the Executive's decision in October 2019 and subsequent updates in November 2020 and December 2021 be noted.
- 3) That the delegation of authority to the Corporate Director of Place in consultation with Executive Member for Highways, Environmental and Traded Services, Director of Finance and Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer to agree final terms on any final negotiation outcomes relative to the outstanding issues resulting from the 7 Year Review as set out in the Part 2 report be approved.
- 4) That the delegation to Director of Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer to enter into legal agreements required as part of the final negotiated outcomes be approved.
- 5) That the changes, outcomes, and next steps associated with the continued management and delivery of the Amey contract as a result of the 7-year review to conclude the 7-year review process be approved.

27. PERSONAL DELIVERY DEVICES

The Executive Member for Highways, Environmental, and Traded Services introduced the report and asked the Committee to note that the devices were a novelty at the moment but had proven to be very popular and the extension of the programme would help to spread knowledge of the devices. The Executive Member drew Members attention to the advantages of the personnel delivery devices especially how they helped the most vulnerable in the area to be more independent.

The Leader welcomed the report and the extension of the programme before opening the floor to Members of the Executive.

The Executive Member for Health and Care stated that there had been concerns at when the devices were first introduced that they would reduce the number of jobs within the sector. The trial had shown that was not the case and that the

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devices were filling a gap in the market and so welcomed the extension of the programme.

The Leader then opened the floor to other Members in attendance.

Councillors from each party all welcomed the report and the expansion of the service. The Councillors asked questions regarding possible further expansion of the programme and liability for any incidents involving the devices. The Executive Member for Highways, Environmental, and Traded Services and Corporate Director for Place provided in depth responses to the Members questions.

The Leader concluded discussions by noting the impacts of the trial including the carbon reduction and the reduction in car journeys. The trial had proven popular with residents in those areas who welcomed the devices into the community and the continuation of the service. The Leader then moved the recommendations of the report which were approved.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) Approve an extension of the current trial period for the use of 'Personal Delivery Devices' or 'PDDs' in areas of Broadhead, West Timperley, Sale West, and Ashton upon Mersey for a further 6 months.
- 3) Approve the proposal to deploy PDDs in additional areas as detailed in the report for a trial period of 6months to run concurrently with the current trial period.
- 4) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Place in agreement with the Executive Member for Highways, Environmental & Traded Services to agree and finalise the operating agreement and agree continuation of current trials and additional trial areas if successful.
- 5) Authorise the Director of Legal and Governance to finalise and enter into all legal agreements required to implement the above decisions.

28. APPROVAL OF TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Executive Member for Highways, Environmental, and Traded Services introduced the report highlighting the importance of maintaining the Council's tree stock as part of the Council's efforts around addressing climate change. The report showed that the consultation on the draft policy had received mainly positive feedback from residents. The Executive Member for Highways, Environmental, and Traded Services concluded the introduction by speaking of the importance of getting the trees right for people due to their impact upon the lived environment and communities.

Following the introduction, the Leader welcomed the report before opening the floor to the other Executive Members and those in attendance.

The Leader of the Green Party welcomed the report and stated that he had received a visit from a Britain in bloom representative. The representative noted some trees and other plants in Trafford had been damaged by mowers and

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strimmers and they advised that grass should be kept longer around the base of trees. The Executive Member for Highways, Environmental, and Traded Services thanked the Councillor for the feedback which would be passed onto Amey.

The Leader then read out the recommendation of the report which was approved.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the proposed updated policy for the management and maintenance of trees in Trafford be approved.

29. LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND

The Executive Member for Housing and Advice introduced the report and informed the Committee the provisions within the report would help to provide much needed housing and accommodation for refugees in the area. The Executive Member noted that a local Councillor had made some comments in the press regarding RAAC and he gave a statement saying that the Council were aware of the RAAC at the Grafton Centre and it was scheduled to be addressed as part of the Council's regeneration plans for the building.

The Leader welcomed the report and the construction of the buildings, which would remain as an asset to the area beyond the need to address the housing of refugees, before opening the floor for Comments or Questions from the Executive.

The Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration welcomed the development of additional housing detailed within the report and stated that many officers had been concerned and upset by the reports in the newspapers about the Grafton Centre.

The Leader then gave opportunity to all members in attendance to comment or ask questions.

Questions were received from the Leaders of the Liberal Democrat and Green Parties regarding when the Grafton Centre would be reviewed and the timescale for housing refugees. The Executive Member for Housing and Advice answered the Councillors questions and they were satisfied with the response received. The Leader of the Opposition then asked a series of questions relating to the report. The Corporate Director of Place responded to the questions that could be answered within Part 1 of the meeting and stated that the rest would be addressed once the Exclusion Resolution had been passed.

When no more Members were forthcoming with Comments or Questions the Leader moved the recommendations of the report which were approved.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the project for providing homes for Ukrainian and Afghan refugees as set out within the report be approved.

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- 3) That the delegation of authority to the Corporate Director of Place to procure a contractor to carry out the conversions and repairs and improvements as appropriate be approved.
- 4) That the delegation of authority to the Corporate Director of Place to negotiate, finalise, and agree the terms for the purchase of properties for the purposes set out in this report be approved.
- 5) That the delegation of authority to the Director of Legal and Governance to enter into any contracts, agreements or deeds required to implement the above recommendations be approved.

30. STREET TRADING - DESIGNATED STREETS, POLICY, AND FEES

The Executive Member for Communities and Safety introduced the report and highlighted the importance of street trading to the area, the changes the policy was to introduce, and the timeline for the introduction of the plan. The Executive Officer thanked officers for the work they had put into the development of the Strategy.

The Leader welcomed the report and seconded the thanks to officers before opening the floor to Executive Members and then all Members in attendance.

The Leader of the Green Party welcomed the report and spoke about some of issues within the Altrincham area and asked whether anything had been done to address those problems. The Corporate Director of Place responded to the Councillor that officers were aware of the issues around street trading in Altrincham and of the concerns regarding buskers in the area.

The Leader then move the recommendations of the report and they were approved.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the content of the report be noted.
- 2) That the Street Trading Policy, Designation of streets, and the new fees and charges listed with Appendix A of the report be recommended to Council for approval.

31. BUDGET MONITORING 2023/24 PERIOD 4

The Executive Member for Finance, Change, and Governance introduced the report and asked Members to note the projected overspend for the year. The Executive Member also asked the Committee to note the challenges that the Council faced from ongoing economic problems such as inflation and the difficulties that authorities were facing across the country around Children's Services and high needs placements.

Following the introduction, the Leader opened the floor to Members of the Executive then to all Members in attendance.

A Member of the Conservative Party noted the costs in Children's Services asked questions around planning income, business rates, and the impact of increased interest rates on the Council's investments. Responses were provided by the Corporate Director of Place and the Director of Finance and Systems.

The Leader concluded the item by noting the financial difficulties being felt across the Country around the children's services and asking the Conservative Members of the Council to utilise their influence to lobby the government for additional funding.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

32. EXCLUSION RESOLUTION

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the remaining items on the agenda, because of the likelihood of disclosure of "exempt information" which falls within one or more descriptive category or categories of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and specified on the agenda item or report relating to each such item respectively.

33. ONE TRAFFORD PARTNERSHIP 7 YEAR CONTRACT REVIEW OUTCOMES - PART II

The Executive Member for Highways, Environmental and Traded Services went through the areas within the Part II report not in the Part I report.

The Leader then opened the floor to questions and comments.

The Leader of the Opposition asked a question around awarding on elements of the contract and whether monitoring information could be shared. In response the Corporate Director of Place explained how the clause worked and would benefit the Council. The Corporate Director of Place informed the Committee that the monitoring of the contract would be shared through the One Trafford Partnership Board.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the recommendations of the report be approved.

34. LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND - PART II

The Executive Member for Housing and Advice went through the additional parts of the report not shared within Part I of the meeting. The Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration added about the benefits that had been seen in the area before investment was put in.

The Corporate Director of Place then gave answers to the questions raised in part one of the report by the Leader of the Opposition which included information about the Council's plans, funding, and those who would benefit from the plans. The Corporate Director of Place also gave additional details of the Council's overall plans for the Grafton Centre.

The Leader of the Opposition asked an additional question about the structure of finance for the plans and received a detailed response from the Corporate Director of Place.

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Following the discussions, the Leader moved the recommendations of the report which were agreed.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the recommendations of the report be approved.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and finished at 8.01 pm