

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 SEPTEMBER 2016

PRESENT

Councillor M. Young (in the Chair).

Councillors S. Adshead, R. Bowker, M. Cordingley (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. P. Dixon, J. Holden, D. Hopps, M. Sephton and D. Western.

Also Present

Cllr Mrs L. Evans - Executive Member for Transformation and Resources
Cllr P. Myers - Executive Member for Finance
Cllr J. Reilly - Executive Member for Environment and Operations
Ms Judith Hanley - Co-Opted Member for Education Matters Only

In attendance

Helen Jones - Deputy Chief Executive
Joanne Hyde - Corporate Director Transformation and Resources
Jill Colbert - Interim Corporate Director, Children, Families and Wellbeing
Nikki Bishop - Chief Finance Officer
Richard Roe - Director of Growth and Regulatory Services
Diane Geary - Senior Business Change Manager
Martin Ledson - Town Centres Manger
Peter Forrester - Democratic and Performance Services Manager
Steve Hopley - Estates Director | Consulting Property, Amey
Mark Pickering - Principal Operations Manager | Environmental Services, Amey
John Holmes - Account Manager | Environmental Services, Amey
Andy Turner - Business and Communications Manager | Environmental Services, Amey
Chris Gaffey - Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C. Boyes, Councillor J. Harding, Sister P. Goodstadt, S. Khan and T. Rushby.

10. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2016, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

12. 2017/18 BUDGET SCRUTINY PROCESS

The Committee received a presentation of the Executive Member for Finance providing information on the 2017/18 budget consultation process. Members had been concerned by the low turnout for the public meetings in 2015, and wanted to ensure that all was being done to attempt to appropriately engage stakeholders during this year's consultation.

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A revised approach would be adopted for the current year, asking residents to 'join the conversation' and moving more towards online interactions. Two public sessions would be held in November / December, with the time for questions and answers at the end of the meetings increased to allow more opportunity to engage in conversation with the Leader.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

13. 2016/17 BUDGET SCRUTINY PROCESS REPORTS

The Committee received a report of the Executive Member for Finance and the Chief Finance Officer informing Members of the latest budget monitoring position, as well as progress on delivering the savings programme and income generation targets required to balance the 2016/17 budget. Based on the latest budget monitoring report, it was noted that an overall projected underspend of £159k was anticipated for 2016/17

Members discussed the projected overspend for the Looked After Children (LAC) budget and whether this could have been foreseen. The Interim Corporate Director, Children, Families and Wellbeing advised Members of the unprecedented demand for placements and the increase in secured welfare both locally and nationally, and how difficult this was to predict. Members were reminded that the cost of one placement in some cases could amount to a six figure sum. The Interim Corporate Director, Children, Families and Wellbeing agreed to share the 5 year trend data on LAC with Members.

Members also discussed the recent business rates reforms, and how this would affect Trafford. The Government's 100% business rate retention policy was expected to be implemented nationally by 2021, however Greater Manchester had volunteered to pilot the scheme and were in negotiations for this to begin in April 2017. The Department of Communities and Local Government gave assurances that there would be no detrimental effect on the budgets of Councils taking part in the pilot. It was noted that a report on Business Rate Collection would be brought to a future Scrutiny Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Interim Corporate Director, Children, Families and Wellbeing provide Members with the 5 year trend data on Looked After Children.
- 3) That a report on Business Rate Collection be added to the 2016/17 Scrutiny Committee work programme.

14. DEVO MANC

The Committee received a report of the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive of the Council providing Members with an overview and update on Greater Manchester Devolution activity. The report was accompanied by a presentation delivered by the Senior Business Change Manager. The presentation highlighted,

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amongst other topics, the progress on transport, business support, finance and health and social care.

Members discussed the possible implications of the recent changes in government ministers, as well as the upcoming election of a Greater Manchester Mayor, on Devolution. Members were assured that the Devolution agenda continued to be 'business as usual', with the organisational structures already in place and many of the leadership posts filled. Members were advised that districts would retain their power to make some local decisions, and a note setting out which decisions would be taken at each level would be circulated to Members.

The Committee discussed the vision to move Greater Manchester from being a cost centre to a net contributor to national public finances and how this could be achieved. In relation to Brexit, forecasts would continue to be monitored and the Greater Manchester analysis could be brought to the Scrutiny Committee for their information.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report and presentation be noted.
- 2) That a note setting out which decisions would be taken at GM level and which would be taken locally be circulated to Members.

15. ONE TRAFFORD PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Committee received a presentation of the Deputy Chief Executive and Amey representatives providing an update on the delivery of the One Trafford Partnership. The presentation provided Members with information on all three lots of the contract, as well as discussing communication and KPI performance.

Members were given the opportunity to ask a variety of questions. In relation to the management of Lot 3, Officers advised Members that the additional expertise and systems gained as part of the partnership with Amey had been beneficial. When discussing priorities, Members were reminded that these were set by the Council and delivered using Council funds, but the additional resources and expertise provided by Amey allowed these to be better achieved.

Members raised their concerns about the standard of communication provided to both residents and Councillors by Amey. Officers recognised the recent issues with communications, but assured Members that the required measures were being taken to address these concerns. The introduction of the new CRM system would improve the situation, and a new business support team based at the Carrington depot had now been formed. Going forward, accountability would be key, with individuals and teams held accountable for each service request or complaint received. The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services advised Members to escalate any issues they felt that had not been dealt with appropriately through the Members' inbox to him directly. Other Members advised of the positive experiences they'd had when communicating with Amey.

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The Committee discussed the service redesign for waste bin collection, and Members were invited to provide any comments they might have. The Executive Member for Transformation and Resources suggested that the Council look to implement a 'Trafford Pledge', encouraging businesses to contribute financially towards providing additional bins on their streets. The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services advised they would explore the idea.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Director of Growth and Regulatory Services and Amey explore the possibility of introducing a 'Trafford Pledge'.

16. ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN 2016/17 - Q1 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Executive Member for Transformation and Resources providing a summary of performance against the Council's Annual Delivery Plan (ADP), 2016/17. The report covered the period 1 April 2016 to 30 June 2016. It was noted that approximately 4000 housing units with full planning consent was expected to be granted by the end of the municipal year.

Members discussed whether presenting the ADP at each Scrutiny Committee meeting was the best way to monitor performance, and whether it was necessary to present the report at each meeting. The Executive Member for Transformation and Resources found it an important part of the process as it provided an additional focus on the Council's performance.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

17. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Executive Member for Economic Growth, Environment and Infrastructure providing an update on funding for Christmas Lights in 2016 for Altrincham, Ashton on Mersey, Hale, Sale, Sale Moor, Stretford, Partington, Timperley and Urmston centres.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Christmas Lights report to be incorporated in the next Town Centres update, which was due to be circulated to all Members in October.

18. PROVISION OF LEISURE WITHIN TRAFFORD - TIMETABLE

The Committee received a report of the Executive Member for Communities and Partnerships providing information on the key activity and timeline for forming the Trafford Leisure Strategy. The report was presented for information only, with the view that a more comprehensive report would be brought to the next Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for November 2016.

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RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

19. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee setting out the updated work programme for the 2016/17 municipal year.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and finished at 8.30 pm