

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 JANUARY 2023

PRESENT

Councillor D. Acton (in the Chair).

Councillors D. Butt (Vice-Chair), J.M. Axford, G. Carter, G. Coggins, W. Frass, K. Procter, R. Thompson, B.G. Winstanley, S. Zhi and M.P. Whetton (ex-Officio)

In attendance

Councillor Ross	Leader of the Council
Councillor Adshead	Executive Member for Environmental Services
Councillor Williams	Executive Member for Climate Change and Transport Strategy
Graeme Bentley	Director of Finance and Systems
Chris Morris	Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment
Sharon Walls	Head of Highways, Transportation, and Greenspaces
Les Dagnall	Principal Engineering Manager, One Trafford, Amey Consulting
Alexander Murray	Governance Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Walsh and D. Western.

26. MINUTES

Committee Members raised issue with the late submission of reports and minutes and asked that this be addressed.

Councillor Axford noted that the Climate Change action plan had not been circulated to the Committee. The Governance Officer confirmed that he would chase the action after the meeting.

Councillor Winstanley asked whether the email regarding the Disability Access Task and Finish Group had been sent on behalf of the Committee. The Governance Officer responded that it had not and that it would be sent after the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Committee Members comments regarding the late submission of reports be noted and addressed.
- 2) That the minutes of the meeting held 9 November 2023 be agreed as an accurate record.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

28. QUESTIONS FORM THE PUBLIC

Mr Stuart Donnelly attended the meeting and asked the following questions he had submitted in writing to the Committee relating to the work of the Events at Old Trafford Task and Finish Group.

“Following complaints from local residents regarding how Trafford Council and Greater Manchester Police deal with match days in the Stretford area, on 7th of December 2021, the Gorse Hill branch of Stretford and Urmston Conservative Association launched a campaign to collect resident’s views on what they are experiencing. The information would then be presented to the relevant authorities with a call to action. Seven days later, on 14th of December 2021, Trafford Council announced that it would start to take action against Anti-Social Behaviour associated with match days.

With an Events at Old Trafford Task and Finish Group having been established, can the Chair of the review please tell me where local residents can find minutes of what is being discussed on their behalf at review meetings, especially as the Terms of Reference state that “Meetings are conducted in a fair and transparent business-like fashion”?

Secondly, having originally raised the issue on resident’s behalf, Gorse Hill Conservatives are requesting to be a stakeholder in the review. Can the Chair tell me if he is agreeable to that request?”

The Chair responded that the task and finish group had been set up as a cross party group with members from all political parties being able to take part. The Chair informed Mr Donnelly that the minutes of individual meetings were not publicly available, but the outcomes of those meetings would be submitted to the Committee in a public report. With regards to the request to be involved in the work of the task and finish group the Chair stated that Mr Donnelly and Gorse Hill Conservatives would be able to have input within the review along with the other residents and stakeholders. The Chair then asked Mr Donnelly if he had any additional questions.

Mr Donnelly asked whether the minutes from the meeting during the previous week could be shared. The Governance Officer informed Mr Donnelly that no meeting of the task and finish group had been held during the previous week. The meeting Mr Donnelly referred to was one arranged by Manchester United with ward Councillors and he would need to contact Manchester United for minutes of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the questions from Mr Donnelly and the response provided be noted.

29. BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT

The Leader gave a brief update to the Committee of what had transpired since the budget scrutiny sessions which included an announcement of an increase in funding of 9.3%. The Committee were informed that the 100% business rates

retention would continue and the budget gap had been reduced to just over £4M. The Leader welcomed the Budget Scrutiny report and Scrutiny Members' involvement in the budget process.

Following the introduction Councillor Whetton asked whether the F20 group had had any impact so far. The Director of Finance and Systems responded that there had not been any direct impacts yet, but they were drafting a response to the draft settlement which would be finalised in February.

Councillor Butt asked whether the wording of recommendation 8 in the report could also reference the potential increase in crime in the areas when the lights were dimmed. The Chair supported the views of the Councillor Butt. The Director of Highways, Transport & Environment stated that an equality impact assessment had been conducted and the dimming was not to be done in any areas where a potential risk had been identified. The Executive Member for Environmental Services added that most of the saving was linked to the time that the old streetlights needed to be turned on to warm up, which the new LED lights did not need.

Councillor Whetton noted that the word "if" needed to be added to recommendation 3. The Committee approved the report for submission to the Executive following amendments to recommendations 3 and 8.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Leaders update be noted.
- 2) That recommendations 3 and 8 be amended in accordance with the suggestions by Councillor Whetton and Councillor Butt.
- 3) That the amended report be approved and submitted to the Executive.

30. HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN (HIAMP)

The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment gave his apologies to the Committee for the late submission of the report and explained that it was due to disruption caused by the holiday period, the complex nature of the subject, and the constant changes in the asset. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment gave a brief introduction to the item in which he stated that the road network was the Council's largest asset in terms of both value and scale.

The Principal Engineering Manager went through a condensed version of presentation that had been circulated as part of the agenda pack. The Committee were informed the HIAMP was a Council document that was publicly available. The Principal Engineering Manager explained how the document had evolved over time with the monitoring of carbon emissions being added and the impacts of extreme weather having changed the problems people faced.

The presentation included a description of the HIMAP and the work the team did to maintain the road network. The Principal Engineering Manager informed the Committee of the overall deterioration of the road networks in Trafford and how the amount of funding available had reduced. On the positive side the move to

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LED lighting across the borough represented a large benefit to the Council, especially when the recent price increase in electricity was considered.

The Principal Engineering Manager went into detail on how data was gathered and fed into the software the Council used to monitor the condition of the roads, which ensured it was a data driven approach based upon accurate live information. The Committee were informed of the different classifications of road and that the funding provided for Trafford's Highways was linked to the delivery of the asset management plan.

The Principal Engineering Manager showed the Committee a slide which explained the life cycle of a road with a need for regular maintenance to ensure the asset maintained its standard. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment informed the Committee that the further down the quality of a road sloped into the red zones on the chart the more it cost to bring the road back to a green or yellow standard.

The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment then spoke to the Committee of the continued deterioration of the road network since 2016 and informed Committee Members that the additional funding received in the previous year had reduced the number of red by 1.5% and had also stopped the number of red roads increasing by 5%. The Committee were told about the backlog of work needed across the areas highways and that to deliver a 10% improvement across the highway network would require an investment of £64M over 10 years.

The Principal Engineering Manager moved on to talk about the condition of footpaths in the area. The Committee were advised that it would require £1.49M of investment per year to keep the quality of the footpaths at steady state. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment added that the Council were looking to have additional investment in the pathways to aid with disability access.

The presentation contained details of the approach for streetlighting including testing and maintenance schedules. The Principal Engineering Manager informed the Committee that the service was not looking at new types of street lighting but rather having a standard style of streetlights across the borough to achieve savings through stock management. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment stated that the increase in inflation had been an issue for streetlighting and while the Council had done what they could to build a stock of street lighting parts and equipment it would not last forever.

The next area covered was drainage and Committee Members were shown that the renewal capital allocation was increasing year on year. The Committee were informed of the issues with the network which included sections being of different ages and with different materials used across the network. Those issues were being exacerbated by the increase in the number of floods each year that damaged the drainage system. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment assured the Committee that Trafford were improving the management of the drainage system year on year as they gathered more data, but this was counteracted by the issues with the network.

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The Chair raised a question about the damage done by tree routes to the drainage system. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment responded that about 95% of the network was within 25 feet of trees and so the service was not able to review all the areas where tree routes could be causing damage.

Councillor Axford asked whether any work was ongoing to tackle the wider factors that impacted drainage such as informing people of the impact of paving driveways, which decreased the amount of permeable land. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment responded that there was not any work being done in that area, but it was something the service could look at doing.

Councillor Axford asked whether the Council were putting in sustainable drainage across Trafford. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment responded that the Council was supporting sustainable drainage for new developments through the implementation of the Trafford design guide.

Councillor Axford asked the impact not clearing leaves had upon drainage. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment responded that not clearing leaves blocked drainage. The impact of leaves had been particularly bad this year as the cold snap had meant a lot of trees lost their leaves at the same time, which had led to issues with drainage across the borough.

Councillor Thompson asked how data was collected about roads flooding. The Principal Engineering Manager answered that the service collected information on the position of incidents and that information was fed into the system which helped to predict flooding for each year. Councillor Thompson stated that Councillors could help to add data points to the data set. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment encouraged all Councillors to contact the service whenever they were aware of an incident of flooding.

Councillor Winstanley asked how the Council worked with United Utilities. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment responded that the Council had a dedicated officer who worked alongside United Utilities and other providers to manage the network. The Chair stated that the work with United Utilities was an area that the Committee could investigate in greater detail.

Councillor Procter asked whether assumptions were made within the plan and what they were. The Principal Engineering Manager stated that there were assumptions made within the plan and gave some examples. However, the Council worked closely with United Utilities and other companies to ensure the data was fresh to reduce the assumptions relied upon.

Councillor Zhi spoke of leaves being a large issue in his area for drainage and whether there was a quick fix team who could help. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment stated that had a lack of resources and the team were not able to tackle all the issues across the borough. However, this was one area that residents could help with by clearing blockages they saw as it did not require specialist knowledge or equipment.

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Councillor Frass asked how much the knowledge of Councillors was utilised as a source of information within the HIAMP. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment responded that it was an engineering statement of fact based upon the information standards set by the Department for Transport and Transport for Greater Manchester. The Principal Engineering Manager added that information from complaints received from Councillors and residents were factored into the data and helped to refine the information.

Councillor Frass asked whether there was a driveability standard for potholes or if just based on hitting the limits. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment answered that unfortunately the service had to focus upon major defects but if the condition of the road improved to a point where all of those had been address then they would move onto other considerations like drivability.

The next part of the presentation covered the work done to maintain structures. The Principal Engineering Manager spoke of the different types of inspections done and gave an example of a good bridge. The Committee were informed of the overall value of the structures and the ways the Council could invest in the assets. There had not been adequate investment within structures and so they were also a deteriorating asset. The Principal Engineering Manager then gave a brief overview of road signage and markings and informed the Committee of the assets and the issues the council faced around signage impacted by people and trees.

The Principal Engineering Manager concluded the presentation with a summary which covered all the areas. The annual investment in the road network was £4M and for the Council to maintain steady state would require an additional £11M over the next 10 years. The Committee were assured that the service took advantage of all funding available both from the Government and Greater Manchester.

The Leader thanked officers for the presentation and spoke of how much he had learned from it. The Leader noted the comments made by the Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment about it being a national problem and stated that he would look to work across councils to lobby the Government to address the issues.

Councillor Coggins noted that the presentation did not cover the length of segregated cycle lanes and asked if that information was available. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment responded that they could add the data around the length of segregated cycle routes. That figure would hopefully be a lot more in the next few years following the successful implementation of plans linking to the Mayors Challenge Fund and the Urmston Active Neighbourhood.

Councillor Coggins asked about barriers on pavements and whether there were any views to remove them. The Councillor spoke about the barriers around Stretford and the issues they caused for pedestrians. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment answered that the Council were looking at a programme of decluttering pavements and removing barriers. As part of that work health and safety assessments were required before the barriers could be removed.

Councillor Coggins noted that the carbon reduction due to LEDs was listed but there was no mention of the large carbon footprint of the highways. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment responded that the service was required to report carbon emissions on all the projects undertaken as part of the HIAMP and that information could be provided to the committee. The Principal Engineering Manager added that there had been a big improvement in terms of the carbon emissions of the materials used by the Council in recent years.

The Governance Officer asked whether the wider impacts of the deterioration of the roads were known. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment responded that the service did monitor the impact of the deterioration of roads on the Trafford economy. The Principal Engineering Manager added that it was difficult to say when an asset was reaching a tipping point as the service had only recently begun collecting detailed data as new measurement tools became available. The Committee were assured that as the level of information increased the ability in judging the risks associated with the deterioration of an asset would improve.

The Chair noted the wide range of issues discussed during this item and that there were several areas where Committee Members input into the HIAMP.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That the HIAMP be considered further by the Committee.

31. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Climate Change and Transport Strategy provided a summary of what was contained in the presentation circulated with the agenda pack. The Executive Member then asked the Committee whether they wanted to go through the full presentation or proceed directly to questions. Committee Members agreed that they had taken on board the information within the presentation and so were happy to move straight to questions.

Councillor Carter thanked the officers for the information provided within the presentation and noted that there was going to be a large increase of demand for electric vehicles. Councillor Carter spoke about the people who only had roadside parking at their property and asked what possible options there were for them. The Head of Highways, Transportation, and Greenspaces stated that there were limited options as there were issues around cutting into the pavement due to other cross channels underneath. The Executive Member for Climate Change and Transport Strategy added that people were already running cables from their house to their car and putting something over the top of the cable. The Executive Member expressed that there was a need to change behaviour around charging cars compared to filling them up in petrol stations. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment spoke to the Committee of the range of options the Council were looking at to try to find the best solution for residents. Councillor Carter asked for an update to be provided in twelve months' time to the Committee on what the best solution would be.

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Councillor Axford asked why people would use the Council supply rather than private and whether each house needed an access point rather than having shared access points for the street. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment spoke about how the switch to electric vehicles and charging presented an opportunity for Councils to generate income and if the Council provided charging in the correct way that was accessible for residents they would use it. One aspect of this was ensuring that as many people as possible were able to use the charging solutions the Council put in place. There were various connections available with each car model only able to use one. Transport for Greater Manchester were looking at this and would release guidance on what Councils should do.

The Chair recognised the issues faced especially on terrace housing areas where it was difficult for people to charge cars outside of their home. The Chair thought the idea of having shared charging points on a street was an idea worth pursuing, although it also raised issues. The Chair agreed with Councillor Carter's points about asking officers to continue to review options and reporting back to the Committee in 12 months' time.

Councillor Frass noted that roughly 60 sites had been listed and asked how the sites had been chosen and whether it was done against need or ease of installation. The Councillor also asked whether the lamppost model being used in London could be progressed in Trafford. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment responded that in terms of site selection the Council were trying to offer provision to people who could not use their home driveway. With regards to the streetlighting the issues were around the conditions of the streetlamps and the Council were looking to roll it out in some areas.

Councillor Coggins asked when the charging points in regent road car park would be installed. The Head of Highways, Transportation, and Greenspaces answered that there were other issues around the lease, but the chargers were in place.

Councillor Coggins asked about accessibility of the charging points across the borough. The Executive Member for Climate Change and Transport Strategy responded that work was being done on this, but it would be some time before he would be able to answer the question.

Councillor Coggins noted that the report mentioned charging points in Council owned car parks but there were many places like the Stamford quarter and Stretford Mall that did not have any. The Director of Highways, Transport, and Environment responded that Stretford Mall and Stamford quarter were being looked at as possible sites for charging points and could pass information to the Committee about those sites. There were also a lot of the areas among Council properties where the electricity grid was not good enough to put charging points in place.

Councillor Coggins spoke about the need to change habits and how Trafford should implement a car club to help reduce the need to own vehicles individually. The Councillor noted that the technology was developing rapidly in many ways and how the Council would not want to spend large amounts of time and

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resources to install charging points with technology which might become obsolete within a couple of years.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That a further report indicating the best options available be submitted to the Committee in 12 months' time.

32. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Axford suggested that a task and finish group be formed to look at how to reduce car usage within the borough. The Governance Officer informed the Committee that there was not adequate officer capacity to support an additional task and finish group. The Committee agreed that the task and finish group to be formed and would be conducted by Members with Councillor Axford as the Chair of the group. Councillor Coggins expressed her interest in taking part in the group. The Committee agreed that an email be sent to all Councillors to ask if they wish to take part in the Task and Finish group.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That a task and finish group be formed to look at reducing car usage within Trafford.
- 2) That an email be sent to all Councillors asking if they wished to take part in the task and finish group.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and finished at 8.58 p.m.

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