

## **Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2010**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Watson - In the Chair

Councillors Bhatti (RG/10/04 - 08), Clayton, Glover (RG/10/05 - 08), Jones (RG/10/04 - 08), Lomax (RG/10/06 - 08), Morrison, P Murphy, Sandiford and Swannick.

Councillor Amesbury – Executive Member for Arts and Leisure

Councillor Leese – Leader of the Council

Councillor Priest – Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

Councillor Smith – Assistant Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

Councillor Lianne Williams – Ward Councillor for Didsbury West

#### **Apologies:**

Councillors McCulley and Trotman

### **RG/10/01 Urgent Business**

A report on Business Continuity in Business Plans and the Communications Business Plan were submitted for consideration as urgent business.

#### **Decision**

To accept the items as urgent business.

### **RG/10/02 Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2009 were submitted for consideration.

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting of held on 10 December.

### **RG/10/03 Information and Overview Report**

A report of the City Solicitor was submitted. The report tracked the implementation of previous recommendations from the Committee and included an overview of the major financial decisions the Council would be taking over the next four months. The Committee's work programme was also included. A member asked that the Quarter 3 performance report to be submitted to the Committee on 4 March 2010 include an update on the performance areas discussed by the Committee at their last meeting.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Performance) advised that the report could include action taken by the Manchester Partnership in these areas.

### **Decision**

To note the report and accept the Committee's work programme.

### **RG/10/04 Business Plans – Business Continuity in Business Plans**

A report of the Strategic Director of Neighbourhood Services was submitted appraising the Committee on the quality and completeness of business continuity management arrangements in business plans.

The Head of Business Support in Neighbourhood Services advised the Committee that business continuity was being developed as a core management competency to enable the Council to avoid or mitigate the effects of serious threats to services. All business plans this year would include a business continuity management overview section which would support the service to be resilient and to be able to cope in the face of adversity. One half of service areas had now submitted thorough and comprehensive overviews, a large number of them reflecting the lessons learned from the threat posed by issues such as pandemic flu and how service areas would cope with the loss of ICT or human resources.

Recently business continuity arrangements had been strengthened as a result of the impacts of the ICT viruses and the effect of the recent heavy snowfall on highways. Members commented that there was a good flow of information regarding the mitigation of the effect of the snowfall from public services and local media. A member commented that he expected to see more in business continuity arrangements about the specific threats to services posed by climate change and the increased risk of adverse weather conditions and flooding, for example delays to stock delivery times.

The Head of Business Support responded that the Corporate Business Continuity Team had not tried to anticipate all the things that could happen which would affect service areas, but rather encourage services to focus on the impacts, such as losing a certain portion of the workforce or losing access to certain resources.

The Chair commented that the Council should be encouraging good business continuity management skills in schools to support them to deal with unpredicted events such as the heavy snowfall.

### **Decision**

To note the information in the report regarding the development of business continuity as a management skill as reflected in services' business continuity management overview sections and to request an update in the March Information and Overview report on the proportion of service areas that have submitted overviews as part of their Business Plans.

## **RG/10/05 Neighbourhood Funding Strategy and Business Planning**

A report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Performance) was submitted appraising members of the impact that the Neighbourhood Funding Strategy (NFS) priorities have had in influencing business plans to better reflect local priorities.

Members felt that the strategy had been implemented effectively across some areas of the Council, but there remained some examples of where it could be improved. Councillor Lianne Williams, Ward Councillor for Didsbury West, asked whether submissions under the strategy regarding Highways would be reassessed. The City Treasurer advised that a misunderstanding of the strategy had led the Highways section to commit its 3-year budget for the strategy in one year. Ward Councillors were now being consulted about the respective priorities of submissions under the strategy so that their delivery could be spread out over the three years.

Members also referred to difficulties in implementing submissions relating to the Youth Service because of the service reorganisation that was taking place. Mary Maguire, the new Head of the Youth Service, advised the Committee that following NFS submissions more recreational and sporting activities had been made available for young people on Friday and Saturday nights. The Chair asked for details of these changes to be posted on the database for the strategy so that members could see the actual outcome to their submissions. Members welcomed and supported the district-focus for youth services.

The Chair asked how the strategy had supported service areas to ensure that the services they delivered were flexible enough to respond to local concerns. The Strategy Leader for Corporate Performance stated that there was evidence in the plans that this was happening, for example Environmental Services had introduced a new strategy for addressing open spaces and Leisure Services had increased its number of community support workers to provide greater numbers of community activities following requests made under the strategy.

### **Decision**

1. To support the move towards ensuring business plans reflect local priorities through the Neighbourhood Funding Strategy.
2. To stress the importance of communicating decisions taken under the strategy to ward councillors quickly and clearly.
3. To request that the Highway's services Neighbourhood Funding Strategy section of the plan is reported to the meeting of the Committee on March 4<sup>th</sup> through the Committee's Information and Overview Report.

## **RG/10/06 Business Planning - Communications**

A report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Performance) and the City Treasurer was submitted setting out the Council's approach to business planning and how it supported good financial planning and sound management. The report included in its appendix the draft business plan for the Communications business area which set out its plan for the next three years, including its budget for this period, how it would manage the risks it faced and how it would develop its workforce. The Committee had previously considered the business plan at an earlier stage at its meeting on October 15<sup>th</sup> and was invited to comment on how the plan had developed.

The Director of Communications introduced the plan, illustrating that the plan set out how the Council would deliver communications to its customers in line with its key values.

A member commented that the Communications business area included a number of services that were performing very well, and asked whether consideration had been given to selling services to external clients. The Director of Communications advised that 60% of the customers for M4 Translations were external clients and that she was always looking for opportunities to sell services where this would not detract from the service provided to the Council.

Members asked whether there was any scope to sell the services of the Events team, given their longstanding expertise in supporting the delivery of world-class events in the city. The Leader of the Council advised that in the current economic climate it was not sensible to include spare capacity within the Events team, which would be necessary to allow this to occur.

Members commented that the risk register used a scale of high, medium and low to identify risk rather than the scale of 1 – 5 used by other service areas and also commented that they did not feel that the plan currently fully reflected the role of ward Councillors in communication. The Chair explained that she felt the plan should reflect ward Councillors role in communicating what the Council is doing to residents and informing the Council of local residents' concerns so that it can address them. Members requested that the plan show this to a greater extent, whilst recognising that communication of political messages from councillors are not supported by Council resources.

### **Decision**

To note the contents of the plan and to request that it be amended to reflect the role of ward Councillors in communication more fully.

### **RG/10/07 Business Planning – Leisure Services**

The Committee received the draft business plan for the Leisure Services business area that set out its plan for the next three years, including its budget for this period, how it would manage the risks it faced and how it would develop its workforce. The Committee had previously considered the business plan at an earlier stage at its meeting on October 15<sup>th</sup> and was invited to comment on how the plan had developed.

The Executive Member for Arts and Leisure illustrated how the business planning process had allowed the service to better reflect the priorities of Manchester citizens and the Executive.

Members praised the business plan for its clarity and comprehensiveness and felt it demonstrated how the service would get good value for money for taxpayers. A Member asked whether the selection of London for the Olympic Games in 2012 would hinder the city in being able to host world class sporting events. The Head of Leisure Services advised that, following the city's success in hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2002 and maximising the opportunities this presented, the city was now in the network of international sporting events. This had allowed the city to host such events as Duel in the Pool bringing Olympic Swimmer Michael Phelps to Manchester, and had given the opportunity for local swimming clubs to get involved in the event.

Turning attention to the service's conclusions from its self-assessment, members felt that the risk of reduced lottery grant funding was too diffuse to be included in the business plan and recommended that it be removed.

Members also noted that last year the service overspent its budget and income by £1.6 million and asked how this would be addressed next year. The Head of Leisure Services advised that rent income from the City of Manchester Stadium had not been sufficient to cover the cost of facilities. The income share to the city from indoor leisure had also been less than expected and the service area would work with the Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust to address this. The overspend would be brought into the budget for next year and mitigating action would continue to address this. Members noted that they had an item on their work programme to look at the outcome of rental negotiations when they had been concluded.

The Head of Leisure Services also advised that the section was looking to spend money coming from section 106 planning arrangements in a strategic manner so that these funds were put to the best use. He was also looking to maximise the benefit the service had from its buildings portfolio, for example by introducing a café at Boggart Hole Clough.

### **Decision**

1. To note the report and to thank the Head of Leisure for producing a clear, readable and effective business plan.
2. To recommend that the risk of reduced lottery grant funding be removed from the self-assessment conclusions in the business plan.

### **RG/10/08 Outcomes from the Comprehensive Area Assessment**

A report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Performance) was submitted. The report outlined the judgements and key messages arising from the Audit Commission's 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and Organisational Assessment.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Performance) introduced the report and advised that this was the first year the Audit Commission had carried out CAA's. The CAA was made up of an organisational assessment, which involved rating the organisation's use of resources and ability to manage performance on a scale of 1 to 4, and an area assessment which provided a commentary on how well public services in the area worked together. The area assessment also flagged certain areas of work green to mark areas of innovation, or red to illustrate concerns regarding capacity to meet targets in the future. The City Council had received an organisational assessment overall score of 3, and Manchester's area assessment had resulted in a green flag for its work on guns and gangs and a red flag for school attendance.

Members asked the extent to which the scores took into account the levels of deprivation in an area, as high levels of deprivation was a barrier to high levels of performance in some areas which required considerable innovation to overcome. The Assistant Chief Executive (Performance) clarified that the national indicators did not always take deprivation into account but the narrative on the area assessment should reflect the level of deprivation in the area concerned.

Several members indicated concern around the continuing difficulty in raising school attendance levels and one member felt that this deserved detailed scrutiny by the appropriate committee and asked whether this Committee could overturn the decision by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee that a report on school attendance be brought to that Committee. The Chair advised that members' concerns about the red flag for school attendance would be notified to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee but that this Committee was not in a position to direct the work programmes of other Committees.

A member noted that whilst crime overall was decreasing, burglary was on the increase. The Chair of Greater Manchester Police Authority commented that the Police were spending significant attention to address this, and hoped to see the fruits of this over the next few reporting periods.

Members requested that the Committee receive the action plan arising from the CAA to see how the Council would be reacting to the observations of the Audit Commission.

### **Decision**

To note the report and request that the action plan arising from the Comprehensive Area Assessment be submitted to the Committee at its meeting in February.