

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 7 January 2010

**Subject:** Neighbourhood Funding Strategy and Business Planning

**Report of:** Sharon Kemp - Assistant Chief Executive (Performance)  
Maria Boylan - Strategy Leader – Corporate Performance

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**Summary:**

To appraise Members of the impact that the Neighbourhood Funding Strategy priorities is having on the implementation and delivery of Business Plans.

**Recommendations:**

To note the submissions from Heads of Service.

**Wards Affected:**

All

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

Service Business Plans

## **1.0 Introduction:**

- 1.1 At the Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee it was requested that a further report be brought to the January Committee which shows how services are implementing and addressing Neighbourhood Funding Strategy priorities within their Business Planning process.

## **2.0 Background:**

- 2.1 Last year during the budget setting process an amount of £3 million was made available over three years for capital schemes and £1 million for each year for three years for revenue schemes identified as priorities through the Neighbourhood Funding Strategy but which could not be implemented and funded through the business planning process.

For the Neighbourhood Funding Strategy to be fully implemented it is crucial that the business planning process is used to clearly reflect local, neighbourhood priorities. This report highlights the work that services have carried out as through the business planning process to achieve this aim.

## **3.0 Service Responses:**

- 3.1 In October, Heads of Service completed their draft three-year Business Plans.
- 3.2 Responses from Heads of Services have indicated that in nearly all cases consideration of local neighbourhood priorities have been taken on board when business plans have been drawn up.
- 3.3 Examples of where this has happened can be demonstrated in the following services:

## **4.0 Environmental Services:**

- 4.1 In 2008/9 the service received 83 NFS requests; of those 45 were addressed as category 1, 6 as category 2; there were 19 category 3 requests and 13 category 4 requests.
- 4.2 All category 2 and 3 requests have either been completed or well underway and all will be completed by 9/10 (a high percentage of these will also require an on going commitment). In total the service's investment in responding to category 1 and 2 has been £532k, and for category 3 the investment was £845k.
- 4.3 Last year's Neighbourhood Funding Strategy requests showed there needs to be an improvement in the management of open spaces as a significant number of requests related to poorly maintained Council land. This was already a concern for the service but the NFS increased the priority given to this work. This year the service has commenced a quality review of all Council land to help both assess existing quality and help determine forward priorities. Although the grounds maintenance budget is fully utilised in terms of

deployment of this resource, the service needs to make best use of the available funds so that any areas of poor maintenance are cleaned up and maintained as well as attending to existing sites. Whilst this may sound extremely difficult it is likely that the failure to deal with Council owned grot spots as identified by the NFS is adversely affecting the perception of the council in the neighbourhoods, and we need to realign the deployment of our grounds maintenance resource with neighbourhood priorities.

## **5.0 Highway Services:**

- 5.1 Relatively few of the first year's NFS proposals could be funded from that year's mainstream budgets as these were already committed to works and the proposals did not meet the scoring criteria used to develop previous programmes of work. Maintenance schemes are priorities according to a scoring system that takes account condition, usage, aesthetics, requests, complaints and vulnerable users. The scoring system has been adjusted to give a higher weighting to members requests and NFS proposals. This should mean that in future years better account of neighbourhood needs will be included in mainstream work programmes.
- 5.2 In addition to the prioritisation of schemes Highways Service also propose to set aside some funding that will only consider neighbourhood / ward requests. Although this will not be limited to just NFS requests, it will not start from Highway's usual premise of, for example, how many casualties have there been but rather what is the extent of the traffic intrusion into the neighbourhood and how much nuisance is it causing. This has been agreed with the Executive Member but the details are still being worked up.

## **6.0 Leisure Services:**

- 6.1 Leisure Services received a high volume of requests from Members through the NFS process. These focused mainly on large and small physical development projects in parks, and increased community activity programmes. Requests were also received for development of ward and local park plans and increasing organisational capacity.
- 6.2 All parks and outdoor leisure capital requests were identified as category 1 and/or category 2 projects and are detailed within the service business plan. In response to requests focusing upon improving the offer for young people and increasing activity programmes for older people, Leisure is reshaping and growing the Community Officers structure. This will increase organisational capacity to understand local issues - many of which are raised through the NFS process - and deliver solutions to these issues through partnerships (particularly NHS and Sport England). This has been detailed within service business planning.
- 6.3 Parks revenue budgets have been realigned to ensure delivery of revenue projects, and the parks capital programme has been realigned to deliver as many of the identified capital projects as possible. Where achievable, other investment opportunities (e.g. Playbuilder and Parktastic projects, or Section

106 monies) have been realigned to pay for or support NFS requests. Overall, revenue and capital funding totaling £380,000 has been identified to deliver these requests.

- 6.4 For Community Activity programmes, year 1 NFS requests were delivered through a combination of Leisure's mainstream budget and partnership funding. The current requests will also be delivered through a combination of Leisure mainstream and partnership funding, although the requests have increased significantly from year 1, increasing pressure on mainstream budgets and the need to source partnership funding to deliver programmes.
- 6.5 The NFS process is therefore shaping service business planning, influencing Leisure's approach to risk and driving workforce development for the future.

## **7.0 Libraries:**

- 7.1 Libraries received 2 NFS requests from Members - to provide a new mobile library stop in the Benchill part of Northenden Ward and to boost the collection of library books at Gorton Library. Both requests were managed as category 1 requests and accommodated within the current business planning process. £10,000 was allocated for the Gorton request over and above the normal investment in stock in this library and the Library Service has made a commitment to review the purchases made for this library from the annual budget allocation. This will involve some customer consultation so that community appropriate stock is purchased and any stock required to meet local need is considered. This has required the reallocation of some of the bookfund from other libraries, as the request has had to be contained within the current budget.
- 7.2 The additional mobile library stop has also been accommodated within the current budget but has again meant a redirection of current resources. A proposal has been put forward to reduce a mobile library stop on another route in the Sharston Ward by 15 minutes per week. As this stop is in a different ward, the impact of the change is currently being discussed with Members. Libraries have emphasised support for the request as it positively impacts on the Residents' Wages project and meets a specific need in a ward that would benefit from additional library support. It's been necessary to take this approach as there is no spare capacity within the Mobile Library routes to provide additional stops without redirecting resources from elsewhere.

## **8.0 Adult Social Care:**

- 8.1 Adult Social Care received three NFS proposals. One request was to fund the Didsbury Good Neighbours scheme, which the service had already done. In addition to this Adult Social Care is doing further work to support neighbourhood care services like Didsbury Good Neighbours. This is new investment in neighbourhood care services to reflect the high value we place on the work carried out by these groups.

- 8.2 A second request was to expand services for older people in addition to those offered at the Minehead Centre. The request was for classes that are health related such as Yoga, Qu Gong or T'ai Chi. Adult Social Care is in the process of reviewing the day services offered throughout the city and an aim of this review is to offer a wider range of activities for older people and other vulnerable people with an emphasis on activities which promote independence and support people to maintain or improve their health. These requests will be considered then.
- 8.3 The third request was for the development of a database showing the locations of supported housing schemes. The detail of this has been discussed with local Members and consultation is still on-going.

## **9.0 Children's Services:**

The overwhelming majority of proposals relating to Children's Services were addressed to the Youth Service. Over the last year, there have been significant changes to the Youth Services, resulting in the appointment of a new Head of Youth Offer and the integration of Youth Officers into the district structure. This should result in services for young people that are more flexible and responsive to local needs. Youth Officers will continue to work with Local Tasking Meetings to identify priorities.

- 9.1 The following proposals were addressed during 2008-09:

- Support for Sandilands Primary School to identify security needs
- Match funding from the Council for maintenance work at Barlow Hall School
- Friday and Saturday night youth provision in Ancoats and Clayton by Barrington Street Resource Centre and the detached team from Crossley House
- Increased Friday and Saturday night activities for young people in Miles Platting & Newton Heath via Victoria Mill Hut, with a commitment to offer Friday and Saturday night activities at Averill Street when the centre reopens.

- 9.2 The following proposals have been addressed since:

- Land at the corner of Hallam Road and Briscoe Lane to be landscaped as part of the development work underway at Hallam Day Nursery
- Old Moat allocated the equivalent of four additional youth workers as part of the restructure
- Clayton Youth Centre will be refurbished in early 2010

- 9.3 The Directorate is aware that there is a currently a gap in youth provision in Longsight and Levenshulme and will commission services to redress this

## **10.0 Crime and Disorder:**

- 10.1 Crime and Disorder received a wide variety of NFS request ranging from target hardening schemes to additional officer posts. It has been difficult to

accommodate any of the requests from the mainstream budget given the limited level of mainstream funding for Crime and Disorder (c£400,000). However the NFS is supported by the Crime and Disorder process in place across the city through Neighbourhood Partnerships, Local Tasking Meetings and Partnership Business groups and contributes to activity to identify local needs and priorities.

- 10.2 In the 2008/09 round of NFS the CDRP received 12 NFS requests, three of these were related to CCTV and therefore passed to Neighbourhood Services. Of the remaining requests one was absorbed into the overall communications budget, 6 required further detailed analysis as they were general in nature (i.e. reduce crime and disorder in a particular area) and one was unable to be supported as it was a request for a further post to be created (Old Moat Community Safety Coordinator).
- 10.3 For the current year CDRP have received 10 requests which are detailed in the Crime and Disorder Unit Business Plan. Final decisions have not yet been made regarding these requests, some of which will be dependent upon the settlement received from WNF. The Crime and Disorder mainstream budget is unable to support any additional costs.
- 10.4 Some of the requests have not required direct additional funding but have been implemented by incorporating them into the activity of the local partnerships or existing grant-funded projects. Those with larger costs implications have not been met due to the level of finance required.

#### **11.0 Cultural Services:**

- 11.1 The Cultural Strategy Team has very little mainstream funding but the NFS requests will be used to inform the work programme priorities of the area based team members as appropriate.
- 11.2 The team is mainly funded via the Working Neighbourhood Fund and as part of the business plan we are investigating commissioning partnership with mainstream services to support area based cultural activity. The NFS funding requests received will be used to inform how cultural activity is prioritised at ward level.

#### **12.0 Housing Services:**

- 12.1 The NFS strategy provides Housing with an opportunity to further embed neighbourhood focus, recognising and responding to the different needs of different neighbourhoods.
- 12.2 The former Housing Services received 8 requests last year and Housing in Regeneration has received 4 requests in the current financial year. Since many of the proposals in both years have focused on land/environmental issues the implications have largely been confined to staff time with minimal impact on budgets so far. This focus, particularly around social housing estates, most of

which have been transferred to independent Registered Providers (RPs) means that in practice these organisations will bare the majority of costs to date.

- 12.3 Of the eight requests received last year one was already reflected in the Access to Affordable Housing Strategy and one was scheduled within the Private Sector Housing Division's 08/09 work programme. Details are contained in Appendix A
- 12.4 The work needed to progress proposals within Housing in Regeneration can be absorbed by either the Central Strategy Team or the Housing Investment Options Programme Team as these activities form part of their daily work with dealing with partners (e.g. through the Housing Provider Forum) and other internal departments.
- 12.5 It is worth noting that RPs are however independent companies and that there are potentially a number of proposals that are still to be actioned. Potentially staff may need to negotiate with providers for each proposal which could become time consuming. There is also a risk that some proposals fall foul of a changed economic environment with associated pressures on all business plans, including those of our partners. This is particularly the case for proposals still to be formally considered at Board level.

### **13 Conclusion:**

This is the first opportunity for Members to consider how NFS requests have been reflected in the business planning process. It is clear that while many requests have been able to be met from mainstream budgets, possibly of more significance is how the learning from these priorities has shaped service delivery in services.

Responses from Heads of Services have indicated that in nearly all cases consideration of local neighbourhood priorities have been taken on board when business plans have been drawn up.



## Appendix A – Housing Information:

2008/09

### Details of NFS Requests

- Transferred to Environmental Services  
A request for an additional part time Street Environment Manager
- East Stock Transfer  
Land/maintenance in Rusholme – Incorporated into stock transfer to Eastlands Homes, including responsibility for residual maintenance at no cost to the council.
- Accepted by Southway Housing Trust

### Environmental improvements in Chorlton Park

A Quick Wins programme is due to take place between January and March and includes spending £250,000 on 10 small projects that will have a visual impact on areas of blight, at prominent points to estates and in areas experiencing anti social behaviour. The projects will generate more interest amongst people living in the neighbourhoods to get involved in the bigger programme which involves spending £10million over the next 2 years (2010/11/12).

The priority issues for the main programme have been agreed and are:-

- Car parking / highways issues
- Boundary treatments
- Bungalows, ginnels and passageways
- Landlocked sites
- Work to amenity / green spaces
- Nell Lane / Arrowsmith Road neighbourhood improvements

Decisions on specific projects will be taken at the Southway Board in January 2010. The total value of priority projects is estimated as £20.04 million and decisions will be taken on the basis of objective criteria which has included rating the priority and impact of possible schemes.

Stretching resources by working with other agencies and identifying external grant funding will form part of the programme. Discussions are on going with MCC Highways to identify opportunities to join together planned Highway schemes with Southway environmental schemes where this would provide added value from the resources being spent.

- Due to be considered by Southway/ Board and MCC  
Extension of concessionary gardening in Old Moat and Chorlton Park
- Southway has this year reviewed and retendered the concessionary gardening service. The result of this is that the service has been extended to include all those people who were on Southway's waiting list, as well as those already on the

scheme (equating to a further 168 residents taking the total number of residents benefiting from the scheme to 510). This does not extend to private sector resident

- Due to be considered by the Council only

Replacement of soft verges with hard standing for parking in Northernden

There are currently no Capital Programme funds available to carry out this work. The land in question forms part of a package of land/sites located outside the curtilage of former council housing which remains in council ownership. Options are still being considered as part of a wider Asset Management Strategy. However, it is worth noting that included in work accommodated in last years budget was a sum of £32k for treatment to trees on Errwood Road on health and safety grounds.

**10/11 Proposals:**

One transfer of land was accepted, two were rejected as they did not meet with Corporate Priorities and one was withdrawn. Those rejected were environmental improvements in Openshaw due to its impact on the Capital Programme budget and increased social housing in Wythenshawe due to the request being at odds with stated corporate housing priorities.