

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
REPORT FOR RESOLUTION

COMMITTEE: Communities and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny
Committee
Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny
Committee
Executive

DATE: 20 May 2008
22 May 2008
28 May 2008

SUBJECT: Neighbourhood Funding Strategy

REPORT OF: Chief Executive and City Treasurer

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To present to the Executive proposals to pilot a scheme to enable spending from mainstream budgets to better reflect local neighbourhood level priorities through Ward Co-ordination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the proposals for a pilot Neighbourhood Funding Strategy, as set out in this report, be approved.
2. That the Chief Executive and the City Treasurer be requested to report back to the Executive before the end of 2008/09 on lessons from the pilot scheme.
3. That the Council be recommended to authorise the City Solicitor to make any consequential amendments to the scheme of delegation to enable implementation of the proposals as set out in this report.

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS

The objective of the scheme is more efficient and effective use of resources by enabling Ward Councillors to bring forward locally relevant ideas for improvement. There are no direct costs to the implementation of the scheme as this will be achieved through using existing management arrangements, principally Ward Co-ordination and the budget and business planning process.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Working papers, Room 221, Town Hall.

WARDS AFFECTED

All.

IMPLICATIONS FOR:

<u>Anti-Poverty</u>	<u>Equal Opportunities</u>	<u>Environment</u>	<u>Employment</u>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 13 February 2008 the Executive asked the Chief Executive and the City Treasurer to bring forward a scheme to the Executive to complement CAS:H grants by enabling spend from within existing mainstream budgets to reflect local neighbourhood level priorities through ward co-ordination arrangements. This report presents proposals for such a scheme. The scheme will be known as the Neighbourhood Funding Strategy.
- 1.2 The scheme will be piloted during 2008/09. An evaluation of the pilot will be reported to the Executive before the end of 2008/09 so that lessons learnt can be applied to the scheme going forward. This report presents an outline of the proposed scheme. More detail will be contained in guidance to be issued to all Members of the Council regarding their role in the scheme as ward representatives and to service managers regarding their role in the scheme.

2.0 Objectives and Scope

- 2.1 The objectives of the scheme are:-
 - (a) to support the ward representative role of Councillors to influence budgets through Ward Co-ordination; and
 - (b) to enable neighbourhood priorities to be reflected in services' budgets and business plans.
- 2.2 The scheme will apply to all Council services and partnership activity relevant to neighbourhood priorities. The evaluation of the scheme during the pilot year will focus on environmental services, street scene services and leisure services as these functions are likely to have the most immediate impact on neighbourhood priorities.

3.0 Guidance to Ward Councillors

- 3.1 Guidance will be issued to Ward Councillors inviting them to submit proposals to the Ward Service Co-ordination Group for their ward. Proposals should be for service improvements that will have an impact on neighbourhood priorities. Proposals may be for new services, more existing services or to do things differently ie more efficiently and more effectively.
- 3.2 Ward Councillors will be asked to apply two criteria when considering proposals at Ward Service Co-ordination Groups. The first is the extent to which proposals relate to the ward plan for that ward. This will require proposals to focus on local priorities as set out in the ward plan. The ward plan should be informed by evidence of the needs, interests and priorities of all residents of the ward. Additional advice and support will be available to Ward Co-ordinators and Ward Co-ordination Support Officers to ensure that the picture of local priorities from community engagement is up to date and, where necessary, that the quality of ward plans is improved.

- 3.3 The second core criterion is that proposals should be considered in the context of the State of the Wards report. This will help Councillors to consider where in the City outcomes for residents most need to be improved. State of the Wards report for 2007/08 are available now. The next annual State of the Wards report will be available by the end of June to inform this process.
- 3.4 Ward Councillors, working through the Ward Service Co-ordination Group for their ward, will be asked to produce a prioritised list of proposals.

4.0 Guidance to Heads of Service

- 4.1 Guidance will be issued to Heads of Service so they play their full part in ensuring that officers support Ward Service Co-ordination Groups to understand the cost and feasibility of initial proposals prior to the production of a prioritised list.
- 4.2 Following the production of a prioritised list from each ward, Heads of Service will be required to ensure that there is a response at three levels.

Level 1

Wherever possible local service managers will implement proposals during the current year by redeploying existing resources.

Level 2

Where local service managers do not have the resources to respond or when proposals cut across other services, local managers will raise the proposals with Heads of Service and then Strategic Directors to see if resources or a solution cutting across services boundaries can be implemented during the current year.

Level 3

If a proposal cannot be implemented during the current year it will be considered and part of the business planning and budget process for the following year.

- 4.3 Where an proposal from one ward merits application in other parts of the City or the City as a whole, this will be built into business planning.
- 4.4 Strategic Directors will be required to provide a convincing case showing why proposals cannot be met at service or directorate level before they are escalated for consideration within the corporate budget setting process.

5.0 Link to CAS:H Grants

- 5.1 The scheme will be complementary to the CAS:H grants scheme. CAS:H provides one-off grants to residents and community groups to deliver their own schemes to improve their neighbourhood. The Neighbourhood Funding

Strategy will enable ongoing mainstream budgets to be more attuned to neighbourhood priorities.

- 5.2 Although CAS:H Grants are for one-off funding, they can sometimes lead to ongoing revenue implications for Council services. The Neighbourhood Funding Strategy will allow these implications to be picked up within the mainstream budget and business planning process.

6.0 Decision Making

- 6.1 Decisions on proposals submitted under the scheme will be made by the relevant Strategic Director/ Head of Service after consultation with the three Ward Councillors for the ward where individual proposals originated and consultation with the relevant Executive Member. The City Solicitor will review the scheme of delegation to ensure that it contains appropriate authority to cover the scheme.
- 6.2 At each stage of the process there will be regular reporting back to Ward Councillors. Ward Councillors will get regular reports on the consideration of their proposals within the decision making/ business planning process. They will also receive regular reports back through the Ward Service Co-ordination Group on the implementation and impact of approved proposals.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 If the scheme achieves the objectives set out in paragraph 2.1 above the benefits should be more efficient and effective use of resources as Ward Councillors forward locally relevant ideas for improvement. The scheme should also lead to increased understanding by Ward Councillors about the possibilities and constraints within service delivery.
- 7.2 It is proposed to commission an external evaluation of the scheme to assess the extent to which the expected benefits are realised and to ensure that the lessons of the pilot year are understood and applied to the development of the scheme in future years.