

**MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL  
REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

**COMMITTEE:** Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**DATE:** 26 February 2008

**SUBJECT:** Business Plans 2008/9: Comments and Observations of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

**REPORT OF:** City Solicitor

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**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise the Committee of priorities identified by all six Overview and Scrutiny Committees following their consideration of draft Business Plans. An invitation has been extended to all Overview and Scrutiny Chairs to participate in the Committee's discussion on the Executive's budget proposals.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to have regard to this information during its consideration of the Executive's Budget proposals for 2008/9.

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**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS (if any)**

Minutes of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee January 2008  
Minutes of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee January 2008  
Minutes of the Economy Employment and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee January 2008  
Minutes of the Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee January 2008  
Minutes of the Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee January 2008  
Minutes of the Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee January 2008

## **1. Introduction**

Business plans have been developed within the framework of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy. The plans have been used to influence the 2008/09 budget setting process and the new Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme for 2008/09 to 2010/11.

Business planning is a key part of the Council's performance management framework. Its purpose is to align service priorities and resources with the aims and objectives of the Council.

In December 2007, all six Overview and Scrutiny Committees received a report outlining the process for approval of draft Business Plans and giving Committees the opportunity to select which, if any, they wished to scrutinise in further detail at their January meetings.

Relevant extracts of the minutes of all six Overview and Scrutiny Committees are set out below to inform the Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee of priorities identified by Members during their consideration of draft Business Plans. Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees have been invited to attend today's meeting.

## **2. Information**

### **2.1 Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

#### **CYP/08/03 Business Plans 2008/09**

The Committee considered Business Plans in relation to Education, Children's Services and Strategy, Performance and Operations.

A report of the Chief Executive and the City Treasurer was also submitted providing the Committee with background information on the budget and the recently announced financial settlement for 2008/09 to 2010/11 to provide a context in which to consider the summary business plans.

The Chair suggested that members give consideration to the questions raised in the joint report when looking at the detail of the key challenges contained in the business plans.

Members expressed concern in relation to the impact of the MEP Review; the financial implications in relation to Out of City placements and Looked After Children; lead partners not being fully engaged in the change management programme. Greater multi-agency collaboration and commissioning focussing on prevention and early identification was of paramount importance. Members noted that a detailed report from the MEP Sub Group would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Director of Children's Services outlined the key priorities for the service and the delivery on outcomes in relation to Looked After Children, NEETS, reduction of teenage pregnancy, reduction of children on the Child Protection Register, the implementation of the MEP Review and the need to outreach more.

Reference was made to the financial implications in relation to the delivery of two new children's homes in the City. It was noted that this would help in the longer term to control

the costs of placements and help to reduce the number of out of city placements, which were seen to be expensive and not always effective.

The Executive Member for Children's Services stressed the need for the business plans to assist in the reduction of NEETS; the reduction in the number of teenage conceptions, and improve the outcomes generally for Looked After Children.

The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources addressed the Committee and explained the budget process stating that the quality of service would be maintained and improved.

## **Decision**

1. To note and recognise the work undertaken to identify and achieve effective services.
2. To note the emphasis through the business plans on the key priorities of reducing NEETS; reducing the number of teenage conceptions; and the improvement of services for Looked After Children. To support the increased emphasis on preventative services.
3. To highlight work being undertaken in relation to reducing the number of Out of City Placements for Looked After Children, and the need to continue to rigorously monitor and control these budgets.
4. To request further evaluation of the budget for the Foster Care Service in view of the current Ofsted report and proposed changes in the future for this service.
5. To note concerns expressed by some members about the impact of the Manchester Education Services Review, and to note that a detailed report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

## **2.2 Communities and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **CN/08/5 Business Plans**

The Committee considered the draft 2008/9 Business Plans in respect of –

#### **Library and Information Services**

Members asked about progress in relation to the national procurement scheme and officers reported that consideration was currently being given to feasibility reports on the establishment of a Greater Manchester scheme. Interest was also expressed in terms of the proposal to merge Records and the Greater Manchester County Records Office. Officers indicated that whilst still at feasibility stage, the concept here was that of a one stop shop bringing together in one place all the records that were regularly accessed by the public and creating a facility that would also be a visitor feature for the city.

#### **Planning and Building Control**

Reference was made to Section 106 agreements with developers and a member enquired if there were any proposals that would provide greater involvement for local members in determining local priorities. The Executive Member for the Environment reported that a comprehensive report had recently been made to the Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee that tracked each agreement and identified the outcomes that had been achieved. Officers reminded members that the scope of works

that could be done under such agreements was subject to specific constraints and suggested that the best way that local members could influence the process was in terms of their involvement in the determination of Ward Plan priorities.

Members referred to the enforcement process and invited the Head of Planning to comment on the effectiveness of the process and the adequacy of resources. He responded by reminding members that the process itself was a protected one but that the dedicated team now established had a stronger focus than ever before in terms of pursuing cases to completion but he acknowledged that there was a need to refine the process by which local members were kept in the loop in terms of progress being made on individual enforcement cases.

Members also referred to the importance of a close interface between Planning and the Licensing Unit in relation to the operating hours of premises. The Head of Planning reminded the Committee that the two processes were operating under quite distinct legislative requirements but, that apart, there was a significant level of joined up and collaborative working between the two services to find the best solutions to problems within the legislative requirements that both services had to observe.

A member expressed concern that there was nothing proactive within the Business Plan in relation to climate change. The Head of Planning indicated that the Service's response to climate change issues were mainstreamed within the work profile of the service rather than being considered as an add-on, and that the service saw itself as a pacesetter in terms of its work with developers to promote sustainable developments. The Executive Member for the Environment indicated that the Manchester Development Guide and Design Standards were both seen as powerful tools to this end, with developers taking examples of good practice away to use on developments in other areas.

### **Transport Services (Engineering)**

Responding to issues regarding accident trip claims, the Head of Engineering reported that previous investment in footway maintenance was now being reflected in reduced numbers of claims. Reference was made to traffic congestion around Crown Square often involving Prison vehicles being stacked up prior to entering the court complex. Officers indicated that these problems had been investigated and action taken to resolve the problem, but the matter would be revisited.

Reference was also made to the need for the Plan to have a greater focus on the encouragement of cycling as an alternative to vehicle journeys. Officers indicated that this would be an integral outcome of the Council's TIF bid by reducing the volume of vehicles on the highway and freeing space for use by cyclists

### **Environmental Services**

A member suggested that the Plan needed to be clearer about the Council's role in encouraging commercial participation in recycling initiatives alongside the strong emphasis already given to the promotion of domestic recycling. Member also encouraged the officers to use whatever powers existed to persuade householders not to keep wheeled bins outside the front of their property.

Officers also responded to requests for information about complaints regarding rat infestation

## **Housing Services**

### **Decision**

To note the Business Plans at this stage subject to the foregoing comments.

## **2.3 Economy Employment and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **EES/08/04 Business Plans**

A joint report of the Chief Executive and City Treasurer was submitted providing background information on the budget and the recently announced financial settlement for 2008/9 to 2010/11 providing context in which to consider the following draft 2008/9 Business Plans:-

#### **Regeneration and Economic and Urban Policy**

Members asked what effect the reduction in resources for regeneration would have in East Manchester on the delivery of the new Strategic Regeneration Framework. Members also questioned whether performance against regeneration targets could be recorded on a ward-by-ward or super-output area basis to enable councillors to monitor progress in their ward. Members also questioned what role the GIS system Tracking Neighbourhood Change was currently playing in this regard.

The Leader of the Council responded that a long-term strategy was being drawn up to set out areas within East Manchester that would require public sector support to achieve regeneration goals. He added that the new Manchester Improvement Programme Director would be tasked with developing a system of real-time ward performance indicators, although this would be dependant upon Job Centre Plus making appropriate information available.

An update on the role of Tracking Neighbourhood Change would be brought back to the Committee in the New Year.

#### **Planning and Building Control**

In response to queries from Members, the Head of Planning commented that the reduced budget in the new Business Plan would be achieved by efficiency savings and tightening up internal operations where possible. Whilst all services face competing priorities for resources, these required savings would not be detrimental to the provision of high-quality services.

#### **Transport Services**

The Head of Engineering Services outlined that significant savings would have to be met over the next three-year period, but that these would be met by efficiency savings rather than service cuts. This would be explored through the Service Improvement Plan as part of the Manchester Improvement Programme. Improvements to footpaths and highways would be carried out where there was an evidenced safety need; and investment in

resurfacing pavements would continue following a reduction in trip claims as a result of this work.

**Decision.**

- 1 To note the business plans
- 2 To request a briefing note on the role of Tracking Neighbourhood Change to be brought to the Committee.
- 3 To note that members urge that the reduction in resources to Regeneration and Economic and Urban Policy does not impact negatively on the Council's achievement of regeneration goals for East Manchester.
- 4 To support the proposals to develop real-time ward performance indicators.

**2.4 Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**CI/08/4 Business Plans**

The Committee considered the draft 2008/9 Business Plans in respect of –

**Crime and Disorder**

The Chair referred to the various funding streams which supported several key elements of the strategy, and the officers undertook to report back with a funding plan for 2008/9 when all the financial allocations were known showing the total amounts available for each element and the individual sources of the funding.

**Children's Services**

Referring back to the discussion on the earlier item in relation to dispersal orders and alcohol exclusion zones the Chair reiterated the Committee's concerns that there should be sufficient diversionary activity available to support the action being taken to take gangs of young people off the streets. The Director of Children's Services indicated that in her view there was already a significant range of provision available but that more needed to be done in terms of communicating this as it was perceived that there was an insufficiently wide enough appreciation of the totality of what the council and other partners already had on offer.

The Chair made reference to legislative provisions requiring that young people themselves had a say in making decisions about limited resources for youth activities. The Director reported on the work of a group of young people who were working well at a city-wide level, and on the proposals to drive this down to district level

**Leisure Services**

Referring back to the discussion on the earlier item in relation to dispersal orders and alcohol exclusion zones the Chair again reiterated the Committee's concerns that there should be sufficient diversionary activity available to support the action being taken to take gangs of young people off the streets.

The Head of Leisure outlined the scale of leisure provision by the Council and its partners and the extent to which this was geared to meeting the needs of young people. He cited a number of examples where young people coming into leisure as a diversionary activity had subsequently continued onto mainstream sports accessing some of the world class facilities in Manchester

## **Decision**

To note the Business Plans at this stage.

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

### **RG/08/3 Business Plans 2008/9**

The City Treasurer presented an overview of the provisional budget settlement against which the business planning process was geared. He indicated that the three-year settlement would provide greater certainty in terms of forward planning and that overall the provisional represented a better outcome than had been predicted but representations were still being made in relation to individual elements of the budget calculation.

The Committee then proceeded to consider those draft plans requested from the previous meeting –

### **Valuation and Property**

Referring to the references in the report to ‘externalisation’ a member highlighted that whilst the financial benefits were expressed in some detail within the draft plan there was no specific reference to the likely risk areas involved. Officers outlined the scope of the proposals and the benefits in seeking a private sector partner to carry out the more routine, transaction-based services and to improve the level of skills, capacity and competency in the service to enable it to become a more vibrant, commercial and customer focused service and will provide the right environment for the service to develop and focus on the issues that will ensure the portfolio is well managed and the service makes the maximum possible contribution to the delivery of Council objectives. Risk elements had been incorporated in the Corporate Risk Register.

Members also referred to (a) the inadequacy of the maintenance budget and the backlog of work in relation to the maintenance of Council land and buildings and the pressures to complete works to the built estate often to the detriment of land (b) progress in implementing the comprehensive database of Council land holdings, and (c) progress in formalising the position of land ownerships not registered with the Land Registry. In responding to these issues officers acknowledged the tensions that existed between the maintenance needs of Council land and property and that whilst the budgets for each were separately expressed there remained the opportunity to transfer resources between budgets to reflect specific pressures and the three-year budget would provide opportunity to take a longer term perspective than had previously been possible. The data audit of land and property holdings had been completed and it was anticipated that the land management system would be live soon. In terms of unregistered land, 50% remained unregistered but a plan of work existed to complete registrations as soon as possible.

## **Executive Division**

The Chair enquired if there was to be a review of back office services, and, if so, the likely extent of changes anticipated. Officers indicated that a review was in hand but that only minor changes were anticipated. A member also referred to the level of budget increase in 2008/9 and officers undertook to provide information for inclusion in the next overview and information report.

## **Transport**

Reference was made to the projected falls in the revenue budget between 2009/10 and 2010/11 and officers indicated that this predicated savings to be achieved through the implementation of service improvement plans.

Officers also responded to a question regarding the effectiveness of the previous 'spend to save' scheme in relation to footway maintenance by indicating that the number of accident trip claims had demonstrated sustained reduction as a consequence of the additional investment made, and that the level of individual compensation awards had also reduced as the Council was now able to mount a more robust defence in relation to such claims.

Reference was also made to the budget for gully cleaning and members indicated that consideration should be given to increasing budget provision in future years to reflect the increased levels of rainfall likely to be associated with climatic change.

## **Leisure**

Reference was made to the legacy revenue from the City of Manchester Stadium and officers were asked to indicate how this was being re-invested in sport within the city. Officers reminded the Committee that the income from the Stadium was shared between the Council and Sport England and undertook to bring more detailed information to a future meeting.

Responding to an enquiry regarding future proposals for Wythenshawe Hall, officers indicated that discussions were on-going with the Heritage Lottery Fund in relation to a range of options, and potential bids such as Alexandra Park.

Discussion then ensued about the maintenance of the Council's parks and areas that still required investment. Members commended the officers for the tremendous improvement that had recently been achieved in the appearance of the city's parks which had been reflected in a record number of green flag awards.

## **Revenues and benefits**

The Committee noted the major changes to rent legislation to be implemented in April 2008, and new Business Rates legislation, each of which would involve significant work for the Service which the Committee would monitor through regular reporting.

## **Adult Social Care**

A member expressed concern about the introduction of the Micare software. The Director of Adult Social Care indicated that the programme had been tailored to the Council's specific needs against a well managed procurement plan, and was a tried and tested system operating successfully for other authorities.

Members also sought to quantify any additional costs falling on the Council as a result of changes in arrangements for mental health patients. Officer indicated that the Council's new responsibilities had been reflected in the budget provision and that implementation issues had already been scrutinised by a small group of members drawn from this committee and the Children and Young People OSC. The Executive Member for Adult Services indicated that the Change in Mind reforms would bring an additional £4M for mental health care in the city, but even this would not meet the extensive need identified in the city and the service would continue to face many challenges.

Referring to individual social care budgets, a member referred to recent publicity that suggested a need for more careful scrutiny on how individuals were committing those budgets. The Director indicated that arrangements already existed for central auditing and for tracking the extent to which in house services were being used.

### **Children's Services**

Reference was made to the national profile on under-age/unwanted pregnancy and members sought to establish how the draft plan reflected this. The Director of Children's indicated the number of teenage conceptions that this was a high profile area of work for the Council and its partners. There was general acceptance that early conception involved diverse risks both to individuals and families, and also had impacts on the environment of care, and she informed the Committee that coordinated action across a number of fronts including education, role models and alcohol reduction had resulted in figures for the last quarter of 2007 that showed a marked decrease in teenage conceptions in Manchester.

### **Decision**

To note the business plans at this stage subject to the various comments made and the requests for further information.

## **2.6 Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **HWB/08/02 Business Plans**

The Committee considered Business Plans for the Joint Health Unit, Adult Social Care, Crime and Disorder, Environmental Services and Housing Services

A report of the Chief Executive and the City Treasurer was also submitted providing the Committee with background information on the budget and the recently announced financial settlement for 2008/09 to 2010/11 to provide a context in which to consider the summary business plans.

The Chair suggested that members give consideration to the questions raised in the joint report when looking at the detail of the key challenges contained in the business plans.

The Director of the Joint Health Unit responded to questions in relation to services moving from hospitals into the community, finance for the pilot site for 'World Class Commissioning' and the Local Delivery Plan.

Members noted the key challenges facing the Adult Social Care Service. A report was also submitted in relation to promoting the personalisation agenda in Adult Social Care, this was supported by the Adult Social Care Business Plan to be delivered over the next three years.

The Director responded to questions and outlined the programme to deliver services; in particular she was confident that the IT system would meet the requirements of the changes to the service.

The Business Plans for Crime and Disorder and Environmental Services and the implications they had on health and wellbeing were noted.

Members referred to current speculation about possible changes in the property market that could in some cases lead to homelessness and questioned how this would be dealt with. The Director of Housing outlined how the Homeless Service was delivered and the support available. A working group was currently looking at prevention services and at early intervention. The consequences of Domestic Abuse were a high priority.

## **Decision**

To note the Business Plans