

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report To: Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee –
9 September 2010

Subject: Neighbourhood Funding Strategy

Report of: The Deputy Chief Executive (Performance)
Director of Neighbourhood Services

Summary:

- To report on the improvements to communications with elected members on the Neighbourhood Funding Strategy, with particular reference to Highway Services, and
- to update the Committee on the status of the current year's NFS proposals.

Recommendations

To note the information given regarding this year's NFS proposals and the improvements to communications outlined.

Wards Affected: All

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

None

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Neighbourhood Funding Strategy is now in its third year and it is worth recapping that the main objectives of the strategy are:
- to strengthen elected Members' ward representative role by influencing budgets through Ward Co-ordination and ward plans; and
 - to enable neighbourhood priorities to be reflected in mainstream budgets and business plans.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Members have requested that we look to improve the flow of information with regards to their NFS proposals once they have been submitted, with particular reference to the proposals put forward to Highway Services.

3.0 Proposals for 2010/11

- 3.1 This year each ward was asked to identify up to five proposals to be submitted to Heads of Service for their consideration. There was no requirement for these proposals to be prioritised. Prior to their submission proposals had to be agreed by all three ward Members.
- 3.2 In total 150 proposals were received with most wards submitting five proposals, and a small number of wards submitting only three or four. These have been forwarded to Heads of Service for their consideration. Of these proposals, 19 have been submitted to more than one service, and this is reflected in the number of proposals received per service, as below. As in previous years, Highway Services have this year received the largest number of proposals, 69 in total.

By Service	Total
Adult Education	3
Adult Social Care	1
Children's Services	9
Communications	2
Corporate Property	5
Crime and Disorder	10
Cultural Strategy	3
Environmental Services	28
Environmental Strategy	1
Highway Services	69
Libraries	3
Planning	1
Private Sector Housing	6
Regeneration	11
Sports & Leisure	20
Strategic Housing	2
Trading Services	2
Total	176

- 3.2 This year it was agreed to strengthen the governance arrangements for the strategy by:
- structuring the NFS timetable around the Business Planning timetable
 - ensuring that all proposals are outlined in the delivery plans of Business Plans
 - ensuring that Heads of Service consult with their Executive Members on all NFS decisions
 - ensuring that NFS proposals are part of the overall Business Planning scrutiny process.

4.0 Communication

- 4.1 Members have previously expressed some concerns with regards to the way decisions on the proposals have been fed back to them, and there was a particular concern regarding Highway Services. This has now been reviewed and additional procedures have been put in place to address those concerns, which are outlined below:
- 4.2 By now each ward Member will have received information relating to the Capital Programme for Highway Services, which provides information relating to the delivery of the neighbourhood priorities through the Neighbourhood Funding Strategy and other new highway programmes. Throughout the year Highway Services has committed to update all ward Members and Ward Co-ordinators on the progress of the schemes according to an agreed timetable (see 4.3), and this will include any changes to the current work programmes if they arise. This ensures that Members will be able to closely monitor progress on all Highways NFS proposals.
- 4.3 Quarterly review meetings have been set up between the Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources and the Deputy Chief Executive to consider the overall operation of the process, and to ensure that Members are being updated according to the agreed timetable below.
- **By Friday 15 October:** Heads of Service will return 'approved in year' and 'not approved' proposals to the Area Co-ordination Team. Full details will be given as to why a proposal is not approved and why it could not be considered within the three-year business planning cycle.
 - **Weds 20 October** *Progress report 1* to Members; this will include all proposals with responses for their ward, and will be accompanied by a full update on both NFS and non-NFS Highways Services activity (including all Highways Services NFS proposals since the launch of NFS in 2008).
 - **18 November:** A progress report submitted to Resource and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee (RAGOS)

- **Friday 17 December:** *Progress report 2* to Members; as progress report 1, and in addition will include relevant feedback from RAGOS. All proposals to show expected/actual start date, progress, expected/actual end date.

 - **By 31 March 2011:** *Progress report 3: Full business plan* proposal responses given to Members; all proposals and responses included in three-year business plans.
- 4.4 In addition to the reporting processes above, quarterly reports will be submitted to SMT on the progress of NFS. By introducing this more robust programme of reporting, ward Members will have the surety of when they can expect decisions to be made known to them, and can refer to the agreed timetable and challenge delayed responses.