

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

REPORT TO: Resources and Governance
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 5th March 2009

SUBJECT: Neighbourhood Funding Strategy

REPORT OF: Chief Executive
City Treasurer

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To consider the outcomes of the Neighbourhood Funding Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report be noted

That Committee agree to establish a sub group to oversee the evaluation of the first year of the scheme and to comment on proposals for its further development for next year.

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS:

None

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Geoff Little, Deputy Chief Executive (Performance) 234 3317
g.little@manchester.gov.uk

Maria Boylan - Team Leader, Area Co-ordination Team 234 3998
m.boylan@manchester.gov.uk

Mair Wallroth – Corporate Performance Group - 234 4416
m.wallroth@manchester.gov.uk

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Working papers, Room 217, Town Hall

WARDS AFFECTED:

All

IMPLICATIONS FOR

Anti-Poverty Equal Opportunities Environment Employment

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 The Committee has asked for a report on the outcomes of the Neighbourhood Funding Strategy and an outline of the next stages.

1.2 At its meeting in May 2008, the Executive agreed a report of the Chief Executive and the City Treasurer which outlined proposals to enable spend from existing mainstream budget to reflect local neighbourhood level priorities, known as the Neighbourhood Funding Strategy (NFS).

The objectives of the NFS were to:-

- To support the ward representative role of Councillors to influence the whole of budgets through Ward Co-ordination; and
- To enable neighbourhood priorities to be reflected in mainstream budgets and business plans.

1.2 In total 208 priorities were submitted, some of these have been placed in both Cat1/2 and 3 as an element of the priority needed additional funding while for other priorities in Cat 1 or 2 there is no monetary value put against it as the priority was achieved by using resources differently.

Category 1: Proposals that have/ will be implemented during the current year using existing budgets and resources.

Category 2: Proposals that have been included in draft business plans for implementation over the next three years. These are subject to approval of business plans and the budget

Category 3: -

- a) Proposals which Heads of Service and Strategic Directors have found impossible to fund from within their budgets for the next three years, but which are now being committed for inclusion in the revenue budget. An additional £1m is included in the draft revenue budget to enable these schemes to proceed.
- b) Highways and Engineering schemes, which the Head of Engineering is unable to fund from within existing programmes. An additional £3m to be included in the client capital budget. However, like all capital schemes will be considered through the capital gateway process.

Category 4: - Proposals that are not being implemented because they are contrary to Council policies, practises and procedures. For example, proposals that requested the resurfacing of unadopted alleyways or traffic calming schemes that do not meet the current criteria for improvement.

The following table shows the number of priorities in each category and the indicative values. (due to explanation above the total is greater than 208)

| Category | Number | Total Value |
|-----------------|--------|-------------|
| 1: | 74 | £959,937 |
| 2: | 33 | £1,450,000 |
| 3. a. (Revenue) | 50 | £945,000 |
| b. (Capital) | 30 | £3,000,000 |
| 4. | 45 | ----- |

1.3 All Ward Members have now been advised what has happened to the priorities that they submitted.

2. **NFS in Business Plans**

2.1 The second objective of NFS was not simply about individual proposals from Ward Councillors being funded; it was to have the generality of proposals treated by Heads of Service as feedback from neighbourhood level. It was intended that this should be one part of the analysis, which drives the overall improvement strategy for the service, which is then set out in the business plan. In this way, NFS should not become divorced from wider more strategic prioritisation.

2.2 Appendix A shows how the Environmental Services and Highways

Business Plans have taken this approach. The extent to which this is happening across all business plans will be a key question for the evaluation.

5. **Recommendations**

- 5.1 The Committee's views on the operation of the NFS so far would be welcome.
- 5.2 A full evaluation of the process is about to commence and a further report will be presented in due course. This will include a questionnaire to all Members of the Council.

It is recommended that a sub group of Members of this committee overview the evaluation of the Neighbourhood Funding Strategy and receive recommendations on the implementation of the scheme in future years.

- 5.3. This year the priorities put forward by wards have focused primarily on Environmental Services, Leisure, Highways and Engineering and Youth provision. Subject to evaluation and further discussion on taking the scheme forward in future years, the scheme will apply more widely to all council services and eventually all public services.
- 5.4 The evaluation will include consideration of how more support can be provided through Ward Co-ordination to further strengthen rolling three year ward plans as the basis of priorities for future NFS. Ward plans should feed into the drafting of business plans for services and hence the budget. Consideration will also be given to how Ward Co-ordination supports Members in formulating proposals.

APPENDIX A

Business Planning Process

For some services, business plans have been shaped by the feedback from the NFS proposals, not just around individual priorities, but also about changes to overall policy to reflect more fully neighbourhood priorities where there are re-occurring themes.

Examples reflected in the Business Plans include:-

Environmental Services

This service is focusing on improving information to customers about ward environmental programmes and environmental programmes will be developed with local residents. This will be a major change to how the service works.

Common NFS requests include requests for:-

1. Increased street cleansing often times specific streets are detailed in the request.
2. A publicised programme of tree and grounds maintenance and street cleansing
3. Derelict council owned land to be landscaped and or maintained.

The service is proposing the following responses to these requests.

Street Cleaning

For each NFS request, the local SEM will determine how the service can be reconfigured to address the NFS requests. This new service schedule will be implemented in liaison with Members and ward co-ordination.

Programmes of Environmental Maintenance

Many of the requests relate to the need to know what is going on as opposed to having more services provided. Currently, we have a programme of maintenance of grounds, trees and street cleansing rounds but none of these are readily available to elected Members or members of the public.

We will be identifying all land that we should be maintaining on GIS. There is some GIS data already available, it is somewhat out of date and we will seek to update this and provide this data to EOC. Staff has been reassigned to undertake this work, which is programmed to be completed in March, 2009 for NFS requested wards and by September, 2009 for all other sites. Working with Members and ward co-ordination to address the NFS requests, the local SEM will determine how the existing resources can be best used to meet local grounds maintenance priorities.

Maintenance of Derelict Sites

The service, working with other partners, has been successful in gaining external funding to landscape derelict sites and we will continue to make bids, as appropriate. This is particularly relevant in the area of nature conservation. Our experience shows that funding for land reclamation requires the Council to make commitments to long term maintenance, many sites do not require extensive maintenance as they are natural areas, however, what they do require is a litter pick and site entrance maintenance. In some cases, a commitment from the Council to undertake maintenance can lever in £000's of investment. Where we can reprioritise resources, the service will commit to undertake maintenance to secure long term investment. We have just received commitment from the NWDA for site works to Knutsford Vale, this site is an NFS priority. Other sites, such as those along the Irk Valley, are of interest to funding bodies and, in future, funding to maintain these sites will be necessary if we are to secure this investment.

Landscaping and maintenance of council land features in a number of NFS requests. A more cost effective solution would be to flail overgrowth/grass and undertake a monthly litter pick.

Highways

The introduction of the NFS has highlighted that the local demand for Highway services exceeds the resources available.

Maintenance of local roads, footways and alleyway surfaces, including drainage;

Provision of local traffic calming, pedestrian crossings and on street residential parking; and

Improvements to public open space and the provision of street trees.

There is a commitment in the 09/10 business plan to review funding priorities to ensure linkages between transport and the development of the City's physical and social fabric and better reflect local priorities.