

Report to: Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

Date: 6 September 2007

Author: City Solicitor

Title: Information and Overview Report

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide information about relevant issues affecting the Committee's remit to aid Members to manage their work programmes.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is requested to consider the topics highlighted in the report and either:

- Note the information
- Request a briefing note to provide further details
- Add the item to the Committee's Work Programme

3. Contact Officer:

Kate Brown, Scrutiny Support Officer

Tel: 0161 234 3376

k.brown3@manchester.gov.uk

4. Suggestions for the Work Programme

No suggestions have been received this month. A copy of the latest Work Programme is attached for information.

5. Forward Planning

Relevant extracts from the Executive Forward Plan are attached to this report.

6. Monitoring Previous Recommendations

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
19 July 2007	RG/07/14 Civica Universal Housing Management System	To request the Director of Housing to report back to the Committee in March with information about customer satisfaction with the service; the operation of the 'out of hours' service, and the realisation of the projected savings.	Added to Work Programme for March 2008	Kate Brown
19 July 2007	RG/07/15 Use of Technology to Reshape and Improve Service Delivery	To request further information on savings achieved through the centralised procurement system at the end of the financial year. To request that a demonstration of an e-auction is organised for members of the Committee. To request that changes to working practices, for example through mobile working, are discussed with staff groups to ensure that they can adapt to changing working conditions.	Added to Work Programme for March 2008 Details of forthcoming e-auctions e-mailed to Committee Members on 3 August	Kate Brown

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
19 July 2007	RG/07/17 Waste and Recycling Collection	To request that the selection of a preferred bidder, scheduled to take place on 15 October 2007, be delayed until after 18 October 2007 to allow the Committee the opportunity to consider the evaluation process before a decision is taken.	Added to Work Programme for October	Rachel Christie

7. Items for Information Only

7.1 Legal Services Framework

Further information to follow.

7.2 Post Office Network Change Programme

Following the closure of 15 Manchester post offices in the Urban Network Reinvention Programme in 2004, the Finance and General Purpose Overview Scrutiny Committee highlighted the need to do more targeted work around the Post Office Network. This led to the development of the Post Office sub-group who commissioned a report by nef (New Economics Foundation) – The Last Post, which looks at the impact of Post Office closures on local communities in Manchester.

The publication of this report was timely as it was followed shortly afterwards by an announcement in December 2006 of the previous Secretary of State, Alistair Darling that a public consultation was being conducted on the change process proposed for the Post Office Network. Manchester City Council submitted a response that raised a number of concerns incorporating many of the findings from the nef report:

- That the process did not involve local authorities in their placemaking role and take advantage of information they could provide regarding regeneration and development plans
- That the process would be led by sub postmasters as in the last round of closures in 2004
- That the access criteria that were proposed were too narrow and did not consider how people access post offices ie by public transport or by foot
- That the process did not consider the effect on local businesses
- That the proposals did not take the opportunity to improve the Post Office Card Account

Manchester City Council also co-ordinated a response on behalf of AGMA that focused on similar issues.

We also distributed the nef report widely and highlighted the findings in the report that post offices play a vital role in local communities. We lobbied government and Post Office Limited (POL) to highlight the need to engage with local authorities as a regeneration agency and in our 'place-shaping' role before looking at future closures. On this basis we have continued to request meetings with POL to engage with us on regeneration issues, in the same way that we speak to other retailers in relation to our district centres. As yet, POL have not agreed to meet with us on this basis.

The Government issued a response to the consultation in May 2007 confirming that 2,500 of the current 14,300 Branches would close. The consultation response confirmed that support funding for the remaining Network would be provided by the Government and 500 'outreach' Branches would be introduced. A number of our key concerns were addressed in this response, namely the Government acknowledged that it was important that local authorities were involved in the early stages of drawing up area plans prior to public consultation. The Government stated that closures would not be determined by sub postmasters, but would be strategic and they wanted to engage with local authorities to ensure that they were able to input information into the area plans.

Current situation

The City Council has continued to lobby Government and POL to influence the shape of the future network and to reiterate our position on post offices, that they are an essential part of our neighbourhoods and that they are integral to the wider regeneration strategies. For instance, Wythenshawe post office has recently been moved from one side of the Forum to the other to better meet the needs of the community.

Manchester City Council has been informed that their area plan will be prepared in March 2008 and the public consultation will take place in May 2008.

Decisions on closures will be based on the access criteria and the area plan. In setting these criteria and making the necessary changes the Government has made clear that no particular part of the Network and no particular group of people should be significantly more adversely affected than any other. The national access criteria are as follows:

- 99% of the UK population to be within 3 miles and 90% of the population to be within 1 mile of their nearest Branch
- 99% of the total population in deprived urban areas¹ across the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest Branch
- 95% of the total urban² population across the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest Branch

¹ Deprived urban –The top 15% of Super Output Areas in England

² Urban – a community with 10,000 or more inhabitants in a continuous built up area

- 95% of the total rural³ population across UK to be within 3 miles of their nearest Branch
- In addition for each individual postcode district; 95% of the population of the postcode district to be within 6 miles of their nearest Branch.

POL will also take account of topographical features, access by public transport, local demographics and the impact on local economies. POL has established an implementation programme for the entire country that is divided into approximately 50 distinct areas. Each area will have an Area Plan that will be subject to a detailed planning process through which future Network proposals will be developed. These Area Plans will then be subject to public consultation of six weeks and a further process of consideration, then implementation.

POL have assured us that local authorities will be engaged throughout the process in terms of determining local information. POL has been in contact with Manchester City Council to request information at this stage to help inform the Area Plans. They are seeking information that we see as relevant in determining the future pattern of the Network in our Area. Specifically they have highlighted the following information that may be useful:

- Regeneration and development plans in your local authority area
- Proposed new settlements
- Major road schemes likely to have a material impact on accessibility between communities
- Significant public transport changes including enhancements, new provisions and likely withdrawal of key services

We have agreed that we will collect this information and provide this to POL by the end of December 2007. Officers are currently in the process of collating this information. POL has stated that they will contact us again once they reach a more detailed planning stage for our specific area.

In terms of engaging with POL, Councillor Jim Battle has recently met with Pat McFadden, the newly appointed UK Trade & Investment Minister of State to reiterate our concerns about the current closure programme and the lack of engagement with POL and the need to for them to engage fully with local authorities. As a result of this meeting, Councillor Battle is due to meet shortly with Paula Vennells, the Network Director for POL and Tony Lloyd MP to continue this discussion.

Contact Officer: Elaine Weinbren Tel 234 3315

³ Rural – a community not covered by the definition of Urban above

7.3 Local Partnerships and Citizen Redress: Report of the Local Government Ombudsmen July 2007

Services at the local level are delivered increasingly through a partnership of providers but this can cause problems in identifying where responsibility lies when something goes wrong. Complainants want one point of reference, they want their complaint resolved, and they want it resolved quickly.

The report highlights the problems that are involved in handling complaints, where there is a partnership of service providers.

Recommendations

- To establish a local partnership complaints protocol
- when the partnership is first created, there should be clarity regarding accountability for different parts of the work that will be carried out;
- there should be a clear statement as to who is responsible for handling complaints and providing redress;
- there needs to be effective communication with those who use the service, so that they understand what they need to do in the event of something going wrong; and
- there should be a strong commitment to learning from complaints, so that services may be improved.

The full report is available at www.lgo.org.uk/special-reports.htm

Subject Area for Decision	Anticipated date of Decsion	Decision Taker (Executive or Chief Officer)
Capital Expenditure Approvals		
Daisy Works Refurbishment (inc lift renewals)	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Corporate Disability Discrimination Act Works	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Beswick Housing Renewal	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Corporate Asset Management	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Spend and Save Schemes	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Surestart Children's Centre Programme	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Building Schools for the Future	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
NDS Devolved Capital 2007/08	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
NDS Modernisation 2007/08	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Housing Market Renewal	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Block Provision for Programme of Works	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Heaton Park Regeneration	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Fire Safety	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Primary School Re-building Programme 2007/08 to 2009/10	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Hattersley Stock Transfer – demolition and replacement of timber-framed properties	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Road Safety Cameras	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Band on the Wall	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Investment in Manchester Central	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer/Executive
Civica IT Project – formerly Comino (Housing)	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Any recent additions to the Capital Budget that may require Capital Expenditure Approval Key Decision	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Revenue Budget		
Allocations from Central Contingency	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Executive
Requests for Funding from the Development Fund	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Executive
Allocations from the Service Improvement Fund	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive/ City Treasurer
Setting the Council Tax Base for 2008/09	January 2008	City Treasurer
Annual Accounts		
Approval of Audited Accounts for 2006/07	28 September 2007	Audit Committee
Disposal of Land		
Property 68-70 Newton Street, Manchester	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
Land at Wastdale Road, Wythenshawe	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive

Land at Bury New Road, Cheetham	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
Ossington Court	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
Land at Altrincham Road, Baguley	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
K2, Ashton Old Road/Pottery Lane, West Gorton	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
Congu Street/Sheffield Street	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
Land at Dean Lane, Newton Heath	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
Land at Wythenshawe Road, Brooklands	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
Land at Wayland Road, Gorton	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
Five sites in Moston/Harpurhey	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
Three Manchester Care homes – Newall View, Templemead and the Coppice	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
Grey Mare Lane/Raglan Close/Albert St., Beswick	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
Parrs Wood Lane/Kingsway, Didsbury	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
Former Sharp Office and Warehouse, Oldham Road, Newton Heath	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
Disposal of an Interest in land		
Proposed disposal of land at Water Street/Regent Road to Towergate Developments	Sept 07 – Jan 08	Chief Executive
Tender Acceptance		
Print Design	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
To finance the procurement of desktop printers, photocopiers, combined photocopier/printer/fax machines, and large-scale printers to the City Council	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Supply of cleaning materials, tissue products and first aid supplies	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Provision of ready mixed concrete	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Planning supervisor / CDM co-ordinator consultant framework	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Transport for various services	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Building materials	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Waste and Recycling Project	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
Event security, stewarding and taxi marshalling	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer
ICT equipment, software and maintenance	Sept 07 – Jan 08	City Treasurer

