

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report To:** Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee –  
28 February 2011

**Subject:** Business Plans 2011/12: Comments of Overview and Scrutiny  
Committees

**Report of:** Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit

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**Summary**

This report advises members of the approach overview and scrutiny committees have taken to looking at business plans this year. It summarises which business plans scrutiny committees have looked at and sets out their key findings and recommendations.

**Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to take this information into account during its consideration of the Executive's budget proposals for 2011/12.

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**Wards Affected:** All

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

None

## **1.0 Approach to Scrutiny of Business Plans in 2010/11**

1.1 Last year the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group supported greater involvement from scrutiny committees in business planning by developing new ways for the committees to engage with the process. As a result of this over the last two years overview and scrutiny committees have looked at business plans in three different ways:

- Committees have looked at business plan delivery plans and commented on the ways in which services are planning for the future.
- Committees have looked at particular aspects of business planning, such as workforce planning and equality action planning, and have commented on how well these aspects are being carried out across the Council. For example this year Citizenship and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee has looked at how the equality action plans in different service areas will support services to be inclusive and accessible, whilst Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee has looked at how risk management and business continuity management arrangements are improving across the Council.
- Scrutiny committees have also looked at business plan self assessments prior to selecting which full delivery plans to look at. The self assessments are an honest self-evaluation, they establish a service's current capability and future capacity to improve and should inform the production of the delivery plan. If they wish, scrutiny committees can ask to see a delivery plan for a service area whose self assessment it has commented on. It can then form a view on how the issues raised by the self-assessment and the comments from the scrutiny committee on the assessment have been taken into account in the delivery plan.

1.2 Scrutiny of business plans this year has been greatly affected by the local government settlement for Manchester. The provisional financial settlement was announced later in the year than usual (13 December) and significant changes to business plans were needed to take account of the high level of savings required. This affected the timing of the committees' involvement in the business planning process and the committees' approach to looking at the plans.

1.3 The original timetable for scrutiny of business plans was revised and rather than looking at plans in early January 2011, most committees looked at plans in late February 2011.

1.4 The level of savings required will lead to substantial changes to the provision of services across the Council. To take account of this in their consideration of business plans the scrutiny committees focused their attention on how services were planning to achieve the required level of savings, what changes to services would happen as a result and what effect this would have for service users. It was not possible to provide full answers to all of these questions at the committee meetings, as the redesign of services to take account of the new settlement in many cases would be a lengthy process.

- 1.5 The remainder of this report sets out the approach taken by each committee and its key findings.

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

- 2.1 At its meeting on 21 February 2011 the Committee reviewed a delivery plan for achieving the proposals in the Children's Services budget summary.
- 2.2 The Committee did not welcome the extensive changes to the provision of Sure Start, although they welcomed the intention to keep all centres in Manchester open. Members felt that it would be very important to monitor the alternative management arrangements of each Sure Start Centres very closely.
- 2.3 Members were concerned at the reduction in funding for adventure play grounds, and felt that risking the loss of them was short sighted given the enormous benefits they bring, including raising self esteem and improving psychological well being.
- 2.4 The Committee were concerned that the changes to funding of youth services might have an impact on Key Stage 4 Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), as some of these were situated in and shared staff with youth centres. The Committee recommended that Children's Services prioritise ensuring that PRUs continue to be adequately staffed and able to fulfil their role.

## **3.0 Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 3.1 Citizenship and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee takes an interest both in the delivery plans for sections of the Council within its remit, and in the quality and effectiveness of equality action plans for services across the Council. At a special meeting on 23 February 2011 the Committee reviewed the delivery plan for the Crime and Disorder Unit as well as the equality action plans for Children's Services, Legal Services and Leisure Services. At its meeting in June 2011 it intends to look at the Equality Action Plan for Strategic Housing.
- 3.2 The Committee's key findings from each of the plans are included below:

**Crime and Disorder Unit (Delivery Plan)** – The Committee noted the changes that would affect the Crime and Disorder Unit, including how it would commission more services and deliver less. Its operation would be brought closer into line with Greater Manchester Police's neighbourhood policing approach, and would support the Council's own Neighbourhood Focus Strategy. The Committee felt that the Equality Action Plan was well designed and ambitious and hoped that the move to deliver the objectives of the Crime and Disorder Unit through mainstream services would not render the delivery of the plan impossible. The Committee supported the work to encourage private landlords to take a firm stance on anti-social behaviour and securing their properties to avoid burglary.

**Children's Services (Equality Action Plan)** – The Committee asked that officers ensure that the plan includes actions around raising aspirations for young people, particularly those living in deprived areas and that it includes measures to address child poverty. The Committee also commented that elected members could do more to support appointments to school governing bodies to ensure they reflect the ethnicity of the children attending the schools, and to meet more often with district youth forums to hear the views of young people.

**Legal Services (Equality Action Plan)** – The Committee supported the contents of the Legal Services plan.

**Leisure Services (Equality Action Plan)** – Members stressed the importance of ensuring that the Council maintains strong connections to community groups who will support and challenge the Council to maintain good quality parks and leisure facilities. They also stressed the importance of good access to allotments across the city.

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

4.1 At its last meeting the Committee looked at summaries of four business plans of services which are facing significant changes. The Committee's key findings from each of the plans are included below:

**Leisure services-** the Committee discussed the proposed closures of Miles Platting pool and Levenshulme Baths. Members were supportive of the efforts by Leisure Services to find ways to ensure leisure centres stay open through working with community and sports groups and developing new management arrangements at a lower cost.

**Library and Information Services** - The Committee did not welcome the closure of five part time libraries, but acknowledged that the reductions in funding for the Council as a whole meant the savings through the closure of libraries were necessary.

**Highways Services** - The Committee noted that the budget for Highways Services was extremely limited due to loss of funds from the Department for Transport and Section 106 agreements, as well as the financial settlement. Members acknowledged the need for funds to be concentrated on road maintenance.

**Street Management and Enforcement** - The Committee discussed the proposal to introduce Neighbourhood Officers, new roles which would replace the existing Street Environment Managers. Members supported the changes, provided that the level and quality of service was maintained and the implementation of the new structure was closely monitored. The Committee also supported the proposal to introduce charges for on-street parking on Sundays in the city centre, provided that the Council consulted fully with local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce.

Members recommended that residents parking schemes in areas affected by these charges be extended to Sundays in order to mitigate the impact on local people.

The changes that are proposed for the waste collection are significant and extensive and the Committee sought assurance that they would be implemented in a manner which would maximise the increase in recycling and minimise disruption. The Committee were concerned by the proposal to introduce a policy to not collect bins which did not have closed lids. Members recognised that it was important to maximise the uptake in recycling, but felt that punishing residents by refusing to take their rubbish in one collection would only exacerbate the problem by increasing rubbish and causing resentment.

## **5.0 Economy, Employment and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 5.1 The Committee selected the Regeneration and City Policy, and the Manchester Adult Education Service Business Plans to look at in their meeting on 22 February 2011. The Committee's key findings from the two delivery plans are included below:

**Regeneration and City Policy** - The Committee noted that there will be a significant reduction in funding for regeneration and employment support related schemes from April 2011, and that staff focus will be less on programme management and more on sourcing funding for regeneration schemes. Members were concerned about the capacity of the voluntary and community sector to take on additional responsibilities where the Council will no longer deliver services.

Members acknowledged the significant contribution of regeneration work in reviving and renewing local communities across Manchester. They agreed that they would continue to monitor cumulative effects of the reduction in funding for regeneration, employment support schemes and VCS organisations and the actions taken by the Council and their partners to mitigate these effects.

**Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES)** - The Committee discussed how changes to the MAES funding would affect the provision of adult education and training and the effect of this on the skills of Manchester residents. The Committee has agreed that it will examine whether the Council is providing value for money by comparing the cost per enrolment with other authorities.

The committee noted that an options review of MAES will be undertaken over the next few months which will consider how adult education in the city is commissioned and delivered in the future. The committee will be consulted as part of the review and will be considering in particular how the options will affect Manchester residents.

## **6.0 Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 6.1 The Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Adult Services business plan on 21 February 2011. Alongside this, the

Committee received an oral report about how the changes to funding would affect the services provided by the Council and the NHS.

- 6.2 The Committee discussed the raising of the eligibility threshold for social care, the reduction in the supporting people budget, the increasing reliance on voluntary and community sector organisations in delivering social care services and how these changes will affect residents and co-dependent NHS services.
- 6.3 Members felt that the real impact of changes to social care would not be felt immediately, as many people would not be aware of the changes until they were directly affected. They recommended that people are fully informed about how the changes will affect them and supported throughout the transition to the new arrangements. They also asked that Councillors are informed about changes before they take effect, along with information about where to direct residents for advice, so that they are able to help them adapt.

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

- 7.1 The Committee took a multifaceted approach to looking at business plans in 2010/11. At its meeting in November 2010 members looked at self-assessments covering the Procurement, Financial Management, Revenues and Benefits and Human Resources and Organisational Development sections. The Committee was satisfied that the self assessments had been carried out honestly, accurately and thoroughly and did not request to see any of the delivery plans for these services. Instead, the Committee agreed that it would look at the delivery plans for the Shared Service Centre, Children's Services, Democratic and Statutory Services, Directorate for Adults, ICT and Legal Services. These plans were submitted to the Committee during its meetings in January and February 2011.
- 7.2 In addition to this, the Committee looked at how well and how consistently certain aspects of business planning were being implemented across the Council. The Committee received a report on corporate support for producing business continuity management plans. In addition, the Committee's subgroups took reports on workforce planning and how this links to *m people* and the People Strategy and corporate support for producing good quality risk registers. The Committee then tested how well these sections of the delivery plans had been done in the plans it had selected.
- 7.3 The Committee's key findings from each of the delivery plans are included below:

**Children's Services** – The Committee noted that Children's Services intend to adopt a greater role as an enabler and commissioner of services, particularly in the areas of Early Years and Youth Services, and expressed doubt that the Department had the necessary commissioning and contract monitoring skills currently. The Committee felt that assistance in commissioning would be required from other service areas if Children's Services are to be successful. The Committee expressed concern that the commissioning budget for Young

People's Services was to be largely directed towards existing facilities, leaving very little for commissioning services from the Third Sector.

**Democratic and Statutory Services** – Members commented that they felt the delivery plan included well developed risk and business continuity management sections.

**Directorate for Adults** – The Committee noted that the delivery plan and the proposals for realising savings for the Adults directorate, as for many service areas, were subject to a number of risks and assumptions. Many of the options included for changing the nature of services would involve full consultation with service users and equality impact assessments. These factors, as well as the terms of existing contracts in the directorate could alter the timescales in the reports.

The Committee were informed about the increasing role for the directorate as a commissioner rather than a provider of services. The Committee support the Directorate's approach to commissioning and felt that the Directorate had both experience and expertise in this area. The Committee registered its concern regarding whether voluntary and community sector organisations would be able to compete effectively with the private sector for services being commissioned by the Council.

**ICT** – Members of the Committee felt that the delivery plan set out clearly how the Council would achieve a fit-for-purpose ICT service whilst avoiding high levels of expenditure. Members supported the ongoing work with AGMA authorities to collaborate on the provision of ICT and the use of ICT to enable innovative and efficient ways of working.

**Legal Services** – Members noted the strength of the section's workforce plan and risk register and requested that the business continuity plan be revised to reflect the section's business continuity management arrangements in full once discussions with the central business continuity section had taken place. The Committee also recommended that the risk management section be amended to show the contribution the section makes to spreading good risk management practices across the Council.

**Shared Service Centre** – The Committee noted how the Shared Service Centre's would operate and how it will support the Council to carry out transactions more efficiently and effectively. The Committee also recommended that the Head of Revenues and Benefits reviews the performance target for speed of payments to suppliers for 2013/14 to ensure that its achievement is realistic.

## 8.0 Recommendations

8.1 Recommendations appear on the first page of this report.