

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED
AUTHORITY CORPORATE ISSUES AND REFORM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD TUESDAY 19 JANUARY 2021 AT 4.00 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT:

Councillor Tim Pickstone	Bury (Chair)
Councillor Chris Goodwin	Oldham
Councillor Colin McLaren	Oldham
Councillor Kallum Nolan	Rochdale
Councillor Tanya Burch	Salford
Councillor David Jolley	Salford
Councillor John McGahan	Stockport
Councillor Dena Reyness	Stockport
Councillor Teresa Smith	Tameside
Councillor Karina Carter	Trafford
Councillor Joanne Marshall	Wigan

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Sean Fielding	Oldham
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OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Steve Wilson	Treasurer, GMCA
Phil Swan	Digital Director, GMCA
Amy Foots	Head of Implementation, GMCA
Paul Morgan	Head of Commercial Services, Waste, GMCA
Joanne Heron	Scrutiny Officer, GMCA
Jenny Hollamby	Governance & Scrutiny, GMCA
Nicola Ward	Governance & Scrutiny, GMCA
Matt Berry	Governance & Scrutiny, GMCA

CI&R/1/21 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed Councillor Karina Carter from Trafford who had replaced Councillor Anne Duffield to her first meeting of the Committee

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sam Al-Hamdani (Oldham), Paula Appleby (Manchester) and Hazel Gloster (Oldham).

Apologies for absence were received from Officers David Taylor (GMCA) and Sarah Todd (Trafford).

BOLTON
BURY

MANCHESTER
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE
SALFORD

STOCKPORT
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD
WIGAN

CI&R/2/21

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting, which was being held virtually and was being livestreamed to the public in accordance with new Local Government regulations allowing virtual meetings to take place during the coronavirus pandemic. Members were also reminded about the virtual meeting procedure and protocol.

Whilst there was no urgent business, a supplementary agenda was published and circulated to Members on 5 January 2021, which contained Item 7 - Budget 2021/22 Presentation.

The Chair, in agreement with Members, reorganised the agenda to take the business items first to allow for a full discussion on the Item 7 - Budget 2021/22 Presentation.

CI&R/3/21

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the meeting.

CI&R/4/21

**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER 2020**

RESOLVED/-

That the minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 8 December 2020 be approved as a correct record.

CI&R/5/21

LIVING WITH COVID RESILIENCE PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

Members considered a report which, provided an update on the progress of the implementation of the Living with Covid Resilience Plan and the development of mechanisms to drive system change to better respond to environmental and equalities impacts arising. An update of progress against the Greater Manchester Strategy headline outcome measures was also provided.

The main points referred:

- A Member asked about the impacts of the new lockdown and considering restrictions could be in place for some time. The Member also enquired about the vaccination programme at a Greater Manchester level and who was responsible. It was explained that Officers had envisaged that when the plan was developed, Greater Manchester would be in the recovery stage. However, the plan was flexible and allowed context changes. It was evident from the first update that the change in approach was taking place as required dependant on need. Learning from this plan would be fed into the Greater Manchester strategy and be built into the medium term strategy. The plan was an immediate response to the challenges being faced and provided a better outcome moving forward. The Officer agreed to answer the Member's point about the vaccination programme outside of the meeting.

- A question was raised about the role of the airport, and if any specific activity was being undertaken to understand the economic impacts arising from the pandemic on the airport and wider economy. It was explained that the impacts would be considered as part of the economy work stream and any future economic forecast/analysis would be provided to the Committee as they were produced.
- A Member asked about specific actions being undertaken to understand forecasted unemployment following end of furlough and what actions were being taken to support people when that scheme ended. It was acknowledged there was a rise in unemployment and it was expected this would increase when the furlough scheme ended. The economy team was considering this aspect by sector to understand, which sectors were most at risk and which could be supported. More detail about the work being undertaken could be provided about what would happen at the end of furlough and unemployment support.
- A Member asked for an update on the inequalities work around the plan and when would it be available. Officers explained there was a significant amount of work around the piste to support the inequalities agenda. Work was also taking place with the University of Manchester around a comprehensive impact assessment to better understand, not just equalities but environmental and broader impacts when proposals were being developed. A Tackling Inequalities Board had been set up by the GMCA Portfolio Lead for Inequalities, which was about providing a more co-ordinated system wide responses. This would then feed into the Greater Manchester strategy next year.

RESOLVED/-

That the Committee received and noted the progress made over the first quarter delivery and the overall progress as reported in the Greater Manchester Strategy outcomes dashboards.

CI&R/6/21

GREATER MANCHESTER PREPARATIONS FOR EU EXIT AND UPDATED ANALYSIS ON THE POSSIBLE ECONOMIC IMPACTS

A report, which provided Members with an update on the co-ordination of activities undertaken across Greater Manchester to prepare for the end of the transition period was considered. The report gave an overview of the current position regarding Greater Manchester activity around the international strategy and EU funding update. Finally, the report included a detailed analysis of possible economic impacts arising from Brexit.

The main points referred:

- A Member asked if the impacts of leaving the EU on business and industry in Greater Manchester would be monitored. It was reported that there were various strands of activity surrounding this and the research team would continue to produce a dashboard of leading indicators and understanding. Business engagement was taking place through the business representative organisation, working with The Growth Company and other partners to have on-going dialogue to understand issues as they arose.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the Committee noted the work underway by the Greater Manchester Brexit Readiness Group to understand the impacts arising from EU exit and to coordinate responses across the city-region.
2. Members received and noted the work underway on the Greater Manchester international strategy and ongoing partnership working with EU nations to develop Greater Manchester opportunities in the future.
3. That the Committee noted the update provided regarding EU funding sources.
4. That Members received and noted the refreshed economic analysis undertaken and possible implications for the Greater Manchester economy.

CI&R/7/21

NATIONAL WASTE AND RESOURCES STRATEGY – IMPLICATIONS FOR GREATER MANCHESTER

The GMCA's Head of Commercial Services, Waste presented a report that set out an overview of the draft national waste and resources strategy, potential implications for waste collection and disposal in Greater Manchester and a draft timetable for implementation.

The main points referred:

- A Member asked how the strategy looked at reducing the amount of waste being disposed of by household waste collection. It was explained that waste minimisation was paramount and was a cornerstone of the waste hierarchy. There was funding to reduce waste; Officers drew Members attention to the Love Food Hate Waste campaign. There had also been a substantial campaign about single use water bottles. Waste minimisation was foundation for all waste strategies.
- Officers were asked to unpack the logic behind separating food waste from garden waste as both waste streams were biodegradable. Officers agreed with the Member. It was about how the material was treated. In Greater Manchester, the material was collected mixed and treated at the in-vessel composting facility. Separating food and garden waste to be treated separately did provide an opportunity to do something different with food waste to capture gas. However, that caused problems as it produced a digestates liquid, which was difficult to dispose of. Garden waste would then be treated by open windrow composting but this required different waste containers and collection vehicles. Greater Manchester would strongly advocate to retain the current system because it was the least inconvenient for households and still captured a significant amount of material. How it was treated was a carbon argument, which would be considered by the GMCA.

RESOLVED/-

That the Committee noted the potential impacts for waste collection and disposal, the proposed scenario modelling agreed with District waste Officers and the draft timetable for implementation at section 5.0 of the report.

The Portfolio Lead for the Digital City-Region presented a report that provided an update on Greater Manchester's ambition for a world class digital infrastructure and specifically the Greater Manchester local full fibre network programme, which came to the Committee for consideration in October 2019 and subsequently to the GMCA in January and December 2020.

The main points referred:

- A question was raised about fibre in rural areas in Greater Manchester and the Government scheme that allowed £3.5k per household. It was asked if there was any potential for Greater Manchester to benefit from that and if it could be promoted to the appropriate residents. It was reported there were significant semi-rural and rural areas in the city-region. The Government's ambition had shifted slightly from 100% broadband at one gigabyte connectivity across the UK by 2025 to 85%. Nevertheless, there were still significant funds associated with that; some of those were announced in the spending review and brought forward. The UK gigabyte programme was being discussed regularly with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) about the Greater Manchester potential for areas within its boundary, which would not be commercially viable without support. A report that DCMS published recently, indicated that the assertion be supported. Semi-rural funding and the mechanisms around that were being discussed. The Outside In programme mechanism would allow for indicative amounts of funding to be drawn down by Greater Manchester. It was proposed and if DCMS agreed, was to look at how Greater Manchester could aggregate activity to maximise the benefit that would accrue into Greater Manchester at scale.
- A Member asked for clarity around the public sector building upgrade work and the different route taken by Manchester and Salford. It was clarified that Manchester and Salford did not go down the same route as other Districts as they had more fibre infrastructure. Discussions had taken place with Salford City Council and the view was given Salford's own plans, existing investment and in light of the infrastructure already in place, it made more sense to withdraw from the scheme. There was investment going into Salford through the fire and rescue sites, air traffic control, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and other sites, which were driven through that mechanism.
- A further question was raised about the public sector sites and the upgrade of systems. The Member asked how successful would that be if equipment such as laptops were not available. It was also asked, to what extent was the programme being co-ordinated with the Department for Education (DfE) for instance, to ensure infrastructure was in place and to provide access for as many people as possible in schools and public libraries and to address some of the inequalities Greater Manchester was facing and touch upon in an earlier report today.
- Authors were thanked for their comprehensive report. Digital connectivity was extremely important given the pandemic. The accelerated programme was welcomed and would form part of Greater Manchester's recovery. The Member asked if there was any way to make sure that deprived areas were included as well as rural areas.

- In response to the questions around digital inclusion, Members were directed to Section 5 of the report, which acknowledge more work was needed to enable improvements and changes to public services to ensure nobody was excluded. Digital exclusion had been acknowledged and there was a huge piece of work underway to assess and develop a plan to make sure people could access the benefits of having high speed internet connectivity on their road.

RESOLVED/-

That the Committee noted and supported progress on the Greater Manchester Local Full Fibre Network programme.

CI&R/9/21 BUDGET 2021/22 PRESENTATION

The GMCA's Treasurer gave a presentation about the GMCA mayoral budget, business rates retention and general budget for 2021/22 and beyond.

The main points referred:

- A Member asked for an explanation about the business rates retention scheme reduction for the Greater Manchester infrastructure programme. Members were reassured that £7m would be funded by the Transforming Cities 1 fund and a further £7m from Transforming Cities 2 fund. In addition to that, new two allocations of revenue funding announced in the spending review would go alongside the capital fund. This was revenue funding to support capital investment.
- A Member queried some of the items in the original or new commitment and asked if they were one off items or if they were on-going. What was the expectation of the GMCA and for those parts of the city-region that had grown used to that money; what were the plans moving forward. In response, it was explained that negotiations were taking place with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) about a partial reset. The growth generated over this period would be locked in as recurrent funding for the GMCA. It was estimated that £21m of the in-year growth of business rates had been driven by Greater Manchester's own investment. However, this had been put back a year because business rates had not been reviewed nationally. There was no risk in 2021/22 as it was largely covered by the money being carried forward but there could be an issue in 2022/23 if there was not a replacement for this funding. Risks were being assessed.
- A question was raised about the scale of the Metrolink risk. As the information was not readily available at the meeting, the run rate of losses would be provided to the Member outside of the meeting.
- A Member asked for an explanation about the cost of Our Pass. The Member understood the cost would be around £8m but the current figure was £16.2m. This equated to £415 per use, which was nearly the amount of a full adult pass and questioned if it value for money. It was explained that the £16.2m was for a full normal year. However, there had not been a normal year as such given the pandemic lockdowns and school closures. Following the pilot there would be a full analysis to understand the impact and inform decisions moving forward.

- A discussion took place about Greater Manchester police funding. A Member asked about precepts, the increase of £15 for tax payers in band D, the increase in funding over the past five years, police performance/efficiency and their substantial reserves. It was advised that the increases over the last three years, had led to an increased number of police officers (347 this year 341 next year). Other issues would be picked up in the public consultation and by the Police and Crime Panel. The Mayor would expand on this further when he attended the next meeting on 9 February 2021.
- A general question was raised about the fire budget and the one off solution last year to take money from reserves to deal with the staffing reductions that were not implemented. It was advised that In light of the Grenfell and Cube fires, the reduction programme did not take place last year. This was not covered by reserves but by an increase in the precept for fire. In setting the 2021/22 budget, it had been agreed again not to implement the saving proposals. A balanced budget would be achieved in 2021/22 without drawing down reserves or precept increase. The fire service was in a stable and relatively strong financial position. There was still uncertainty around pensions funding for fire service, which could be potentially problematic in future years.
- The Chair informed Members that the Greater Manchester Mayor would be attending the next meeting on 9 February 2021 to focus on the 2021/22 budget as it was a key function of the Committee. The Chair encouraged Members to think about what points needed to be raised.

RESOLVED/-

That the presentation be received and noted.

CI&R/10/21 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE 2020/21 MUNICIPAL YEAR

The work programme for the 2020/21 Municipal Year was presented to Members for population for future meetings.

RESOLVED/-

That the work programme be updated following the meeting.

CI&R/11/21 REGISTER OF KEY DECISIONS

RESOLVED/-

That Members received and noted the register of key decisions dated 5 January 2021.

CI&R/12/21 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 9 February 2021 at 4.00 pm via Microsoft Live virtual event.