

Growth & Prosperity Scrutiny Panel

27th January 2020

Meeting commenced: 6.00 p.m.

“ ended: 7.55 p.m.

Present: Councillor Sharpe – in the Chair
Councillors August, Critchley, Dickman, R. Garrido, Hesling, Lewis, Nkurunziza, Ward and Weir

Councillor Antrobus – Lead Member for Planning & Sustainable Development

Officers: Paul Hutchings – Strategic Finance Manager
Sarah Ashurst – Group Leader, Investment Team
Bernie Vaudrey – Head of Business Investment & Programmes
Claire Edwards – Democratic Services

Members of the public in attendance:

Graham Langton

Three members of the public observed the meeting

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Jolley and Wheeler, and on behalf of Councillor Kelly, Lead Member for Housing & Neighbourhoods.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor R. Garrido declared an interest in respect of the matters recorded under Minutes 5 (Place Services Group Performance Report) and 9 (Pendleton Tower Blocks) due to him being a Board Member of ForViva.

3. Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2019/20

Consideration was given to a report of the Strategic Director for Place which (a) set out the current position of expenditure against the revenue budget, forecasting the year end position and highlighting any risks/sensitivities and revenue budget virements proposed, (b) provided an analysis of progress made towards agreed CSR savings targets, and (c) provided an update of the capital programme.

Discussion took place which included reference to the following –

- The £0.068m reported adverse variance which related to a £0.100m forecasted overspend on The Landing as identified in the Business Plan, which had been offset in part by underspends across the wider service group.
- The £0.149m negative variance on property which was due in the main to a forecasted overspend on repairs and maintenance of corporate buildings and underachievement of income on Salford University Park. It was indicated that discussions were ongoing to help mitigate some of the issues.
- With regard to Table A: Revenue budget to November 2019, reference was made to the total forecast variation of £133,000, which it was hoped would be reduced to zero to achieve a balanced position.

- Bus Lane Enforcement – the Panel asked to be provided with further information regarding the current arrangements, future plans and the financial position.

RESOLVED: (1) THAT the content of the report be noted.

(2) THAT Councillor Antrobus arrange for information to be provided to the Panel in respect of current and future arrangements in relation to Bus Lane Enforcement together with the financial position.

4. Place Service Group Performance Report

Sarah Ashurst presented the Place Service Group Performance Report in respect of Quarter 2/Half-year 2019-20 which provided details of (a) performance highlights in respect of Economic Development, Housing and Transport (it was noted that, as at the end of Quarter 2 2019/20, all performance measures in the service group were either on target or above target), and (b) management information.

Discussion took place which included reference to the following –

Q - Are there any potential tenants with regard to Embankment?

A - It was looking positive that securing tenants would not be an issue.

Q - How many empty properties have been brought back into use?

A - Currently 123 – the target is 250.

- With regard to Housing Core Performance Indicators, reference was made to the delivery of new homes, including 225 affordable homes and 250 empty properties brought back into use and it was indicated that those three indicators would be separated out for future reports.
- With regard to the number of households assisted to access energy efficiency measures and achieve affordable warmth, it was reported that work was being undertaken with Greater Manchester Combined Authority regarding how the required target could be achieved by 2038.
- Park & Ride at Walkden Station – public consultation to start next week.
Reference was made to a funding bid that had been submitted to the Department for Transport's Access for All programme, a pot of funding that was only made available once every five years, to provide disabled access for the station. The bid met all the requirements of the fund and had the full support of community groups, MPs, the three Ward Councillors, the City Mayor and the Greater Manchester Mayor and the Council. Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) agreed and identified Walkden Station as the top priority in Greater Manchester to receive step free access. Unfortunately, the funding application had been rejected without explanation.

Councillor Antrobus expressed his extreme disappointment with regard to the rejection of the funding application and indicated that the Council was continuing to lobby the government in respect of this matter.

Panel Members expressed their disappointment and concerns regarding the above situation.

RESOLVED: (1) THAT the content of the report be noted.

(2) THAT a representation be made to Transport for Greater Manchester, on behalf of the panel, expressing their disappointment that the funding application had been rejected, outlining their concerns that disabled access to the station had been well overdue for some time and supporting the representations that had already been submitted requesting that they ask the government to re-consider this matter.

5. Update Report on Greater Manchester's Clean Air Plan: Tackling Nitrogen Dioxide Exceedances at the Roadside

Councillor Antrobus and Bernie Vaudrey presented a report regarding the above matter that was to be considered at a meeting of the Cabinet the following day. The report set out the progress that had been made following the government's response to Greater Manchester's Outline Business Case to tackle Nitrogen Dioxide Exceedances at the Roadside (OBC), and the implications for the ten Greater Manchester local authorities in relation to the schedule of work and statutory consultation on the Clean Air Plan.

The report provided information with regard to the following –

- Background

- Introduction

- Progress since last update

- Government Asks

In addition to the response on the specific clean air proposals, additional asks were made of Government, as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report. These included an ask for Government to direct Highways England to tackle NO₂ exceedances on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) in the same way that local authorities that have been directed to undertake a feasibility study are having to take action on the local road network. The ministerial feedback outlined that Highways England are working up plans for exceedances identified by national modelling on their network, and that this was not expected to include charging on the SRN but would instead focus on a range of measures such as traffic management, speed limits and barriers. Officers had been advised that the measures proposed by Highways England in GM focused on introducing 60mph speed limits on parts of the SRN. It highlighted the concern that Highways England had not been directed to act in relation to tackling NO₂ exceedances in the same way as GM local authorities, and that this would leave some publicly accessible areas of GM adjacent to trunk roads managed by Highways England, with NO₂ exceedances that are not being addressed by the Highways England plan.

- Vehicle Idling

Greater Manchester needed to secure the required level of Government funding to implement the Clean Vehicle scheme (which included a Bus Fund) – then Bus emissions and NO₂ would be significantly impacted as a result of bus fleet renewal and retrofit. In addition, Greater Manchester was pressing government on the rules around vehicle idling.

- Next Steps

- Recommendations to Cabinet:

- a) Note the progress made to date;

- b) Note the Ministerial Direction under the Environment Act 1995 (Greater Manchester) Air Quality Direction 2019 which requires all ten Greater Manchester (GM) local authorities to implement a charging Clean Air Zone Class C across the region;

- c) Agree the need to continue to proceed towards developing the implementation and contract arrangements of a charging Clean Air Zone in GM, utilising the initial tranche of £36m of funding as required by the Ministerial Direction / feedback;

- d) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director Place to determine the preparatory implementation and contract arrangements that need to be undertaken utilising the initial tranche of £36m of funding to deliver the CAZ and other GM CAP measures, as set out at paragraph 4.11;

- e) Note that the report to determine the timings for commencing the consultation will be received in the Spring of 2020;

- f) Note the outstanding need to secure a clear response from Government on the clean vehicles funding asks;

- g) Note that Highways England have not been directed to act in relation to tackling NO₂ exceedances in the same way as the GM local authorities, and that this will leave some publicly accessible areas of GM adjacent to trunk roads managed by Highways England, with NO₂ exceedances that are not being addressed by the Highways England plan;

- h) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director Place to agree the final content and submission of the documents listed in Appendix One for formal submission to JAQU and note their Publication status;
- i) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director Place to determine any further technical reports for formal submission to JAQU; and
- j) Note that Salford City Mayor will co-sign a letter from the GM Authorities to the Transport Secretary asking Government to bring forward the launch of a statutory consultation to strengthen rules on vehicle idling.

Discussion took place which included reference to the following –

- Support for Greater Manchester continuing to put pressure on Government in respect of instructing Highways England to take action on the Strategic Road Network.
- The need to understand the risks/implications to Greater Manchester, and Salford, (in terms of risks/implications to the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan/residents) of Highways England not being directed to act in the same way as the Greater Manchester authorities.
- Whether a risk assessment had been undertaken in relation to the impact (on residents, stakeholder groups, etc.) of the delays that had arisen due to the need to seek further clarification from Government and JAQU, which had resulted in the GM authorities not having been in a position to submit their full business case by the required date.
- What further action could be taken to address the issue of bus idling/emissions.

RESOLVED: THAT the panel's comments be noted and taken into account during future consideration of the matter.

6. Item for Information – Summary Update on Development across Salford Quays

RESOLVED: THAT the content of the summary update be noted.

7. Minutes of meeting held on 28th October 2019

The minutes of the above meeting were agreed as a correct record.

8. Work Programme

The content of the Work Programme was noted.

9. Pendleton Tower Blocks

Councillor R. Garrido informed the Panel that Mr. Langton had raised the following matter with him prior to the meeting, in respect of which he had obtained a response from Ben Dolan, Strategic Director for Place, which is included below:

- Why had residents been sent maintenance bills, requesting bank details, for heating appliances installed in their homes? This was causing great distress to residents. The same thing had happened the previous year and, following complaints from residents, Pendleton Together had indicated that the letters had been sent in error.

Pendleton Together were aware that letters had gone out to all residents from NIBE, the manufacturer of the exhaust air heating units. NIBE must have the Pendleton properties on a database and are using this to sell their maintenance and warranty services. Pendleton Together, who are responsible for the ongoing maintenance and servicing of tenants heating systems have contacted NIBE to try and stop them sending out the letters and will be putting out further information for tenants regarding this matter in the next resident newsletter.

Concern was expressed that some elderly and vulnerable residents may believe that they are required to submit their bank details. It was suggested that a more urgent response was required from Pendleton Together and it was recommended that contact should be made with all residents explaining the purpose of the correspondence from NIBE and advising them that they are not required to submit their bank details.

Councillor R. Garrido reported that he had raised the following matter with Ben Dolan prior to the meeting, in respect of which he had received the response included below:

- Why had the shattered glass panel that had been raised with the City Mayor in May 2019 still not been replaced?

The two shattered balconies had been investigated and traced to vandalism. All balconies were to be subject to further inspection as part of the works to replace the cladding system. Pendleton Together had ordered the replacement glass which had taken some time due to difficulty in gaining access to the properties. The tenants had been contacted with regard to their availability for the glass to be fitted and had been advised of a 3 week lead in time for the specialist glass to be manufactured/cut.

Concern was expressed regarding the delay that had taken place in addressing the above issue.

Mr. Langton enquired as to whether a plan of the works that were to be undertaken to the tower blocks would be available to residents. He made reference to work that was currently taking place inside Malus Court and Plane Court, which involved hatches being cut out of the ceilings, and expressed concern that residents had not been made aware that this work was to be undertaken or of the purpose of the works.

Councillor R. Garrido referred to the need to seek assurance from Pendleton Together that all properties were to be inspected. He also made reference to the need to clarify whether issues that were identified during inspection related to snagging issues (i.e. faults that were present upon completion of the refurbishment works) or repairs.

Members expressed concern with regard to the issues that were being raised by Mr. Langton not falling within the remit of the Panel as the appropriate route should be through Ward Councillors. Mr. Langton expressed concern that he had not been contacted to meet with Ward Councillors in respect of issues that he had previously raised with the Panel. Councillor Nkurunziza referred to (a) public meetings, drop-ins, resident events and MP surgeries that had taken place over the last two years that Mr. Langton had not taken the opportunity to attend, which had involved ward councillors who residents were able to contact directly should they wish to do so, (b) issues regarding other residents' homes that had previously been raised by Mr. Langton, in respect of which neither he nor his fellow ward councillors had been contacted by the residents concerned, and (c) there being no record of Mr. Langton having made enquiries with Pendleton Together in relation to the repairs issues that he had previously raised.

Mr. Langton was asked to direct any future queries/issues to Pendleton Together and/or Ward Councillors as this was the appropriate route and would enable them to be investigated more expediently.

RESOLVED: (1) THAT it be recommended to Pendleton Together that contact be made with all residents as soon as possible explaining the purpose of the correspondence they had received from NIBE and advising them that they are not required to submit their bank details.

(2) THAT assurance be sought from Pendleton Together regarding the intention for all properties to be inspected and that clarification would be obtained as to whether issues identified during the inspections related to snagging issues or repairs.

(3) THAT it be recommended to Pendleton Together that they ensure that residents are notified of any planned works to be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.

(4) THAT it be noted that the Panel asked Mr. Langton to direct any further queries/issues to Pendleton Together and/or Ward Councillors.

Response to recommendations made by the Growth & Prosperity Scrutiny Panel at 27th January meeting:

RESOLVED: (1) THAT it be recommended to Pendleton Together that contact be made with all residents as soon as possible explaining the purpose of the correspondence they had received from NIBE and advising them that they are not required to submit their bank details.

Pendleton Together contacted NIBE regarding this issue as soon as they were made aware to prevent any further information being sent to other blocks. The NIBE servicing issue will feature in future communications, social media and direct contact with residents through the ongoing resident liaison process. Pendleton Together only received two contacts from concerned residents regarding this issue but understand that others may well have received the communication hence the action above.

(2) THAT assurance be sought from Pendleton Together regarding the intention for all properties to be inspected and that clarification would be obtained as to whether issues identified during the inspections related to snagging issues or repairs.

A programme of surveys had commenced to all flats. The surveys will inform the detail of any fire safety works that are required in each property. The balconies are not part of this survey and these are being surveyed as part of the external works to remove and replace the cladding. The contractor carrying out the external works will action any remedial work identified and ensure this is compliant with current legislation and guidance.

The surveys do not cover all the work carried out by Keepmoat. Residents can report repairs to Pendleton Together in the normal way.

(3) THAT it be recommended to Pendleton Together that they ensure that residents are notified of any planned works to be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.

Significant effort is made to ensure that every resident is kept up to date with what is going on (and when) and, most of all has a clear line of communication for requests, feedback and complaints – should there be any.

Pendleton Together have employed a dedicated Resident Liaison team to deliver support and advice to residents and the wider communities affected by the works, keeping them continually informed and up to date with progress and related issues.

The resident liaison service provides a face to face enquiry service and a single information access point for all interested parties, enabling all queries relating to the works to be dealt with efficiently and consistently.

The approach includes but is not limited to regular newsletters, information posted on websites, and individual contact as appropriate with housing staff including face-to-face contact, telephone, e-mail, and written communication, and other events as required.

All residents are notified of upcoming work in writing at various intervals and the team visit residents both prior to the works commencing in dwellings and during the works period. Malus Court tenants were written to prior to survey work beginning in the corridors outside dwellings.