

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY
CORPORATE ISSUES AND REFORM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2020 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS LIVE EVENT**

PRESENT:

Councillor Tom Pickstone	Bury (Chair)
Councillor Akhtar Zaman	Bolton (Substitute)
Councillor Sam Al-Hamdani	Oldham (Substitute)
Councillor Chris Goodwin	Oldham
Councillor Colin McLaren	Oldham
Councillor Kallum Nolan	Rochdale
Councillor Karen Garrido	Salford (Substitute)
Councillor David Jolley	Salford
Councillor John McGahan	Stockport
Councillor Sean Anstee	Trafford (Substitute)
Councillor Anne Duffield	Trafford
Councillor Dave Morgan	Trafford
Councillor Joanne Marshall	Wigan

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Andy Burnham	Mayor of Greater Manchester
Kevin Lee	Director – Mayor’s Office, GMCA
Steve Wilson	Treasurer, GMCA
David Taylor	Executive Director, Waste & Resources, GMCA
Joanne Heron	Statutory Scrutiny Officer, GMCA
Matt Berry	Senior Governor & Scrutiny Officer, GMCA
Jenny Hollamby	Senior Governor & Scrutiny Officer, GMCA

CI&R/30/20 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tanya Burch, Beverley Fletcher, Hazel Gloster, Teresa Smith and Dena Ryness.

CI&R/31/20 CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

Whilst there were no Chair’s announcements or urgent business, the Chair reorganised the agenda to take account of the Greater Manchester Mayor attending the meeting at 4.30 pm.

CI&R/32/20**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by any Member of the Committee. The Chair reminded Members to complete their Annual Declaration and return it to the Governance & Scrutiny Officer.

RESOLVED/-

That Members complete their Annual Declaration of Interest form and return it to the Governance & Scrutiny Officer.

CI&R/33/20**MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee, held on 6 October 2020 were submitted.

RESOLVED/-

That the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 6 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.

CI&R/34/20**BUDGET UPDATE 2020/21 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP)
TO 2023/24**

Consideration was given to a report that updated the Committee with the forecast revenue outturn for 2020/21 and set out an updated strategy outlining major assumptions/risks, which had been taken into account in producing the proposals.

The GMCA's Executive Director, Waste & Resources, introduced the report, which was followed by a question and answer session.

The main points referred:

- The Chair asked about projections, the second lockdown, any negative impacts on this year's budget and if more funds could be used from reserves. It was envisaged that the second lockdown would not make a significant difference at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and of the overall tonnage would be similar to last year. The main difference was that the HWRC sites were not open in April 2020 and for most of May 2020 meaning 12 month of tonnage would be delivered over the ten month period. In terms of kerbside collections, Districts were forecasting some increase over the second lockdown period. However, it would be less than the first lockdown as some activities such as school and work were still happening. District forecasts were expected next week, which would include projections for November 2020 and the rest of the financial year. For the most part, there were big spikes in residual waste, dry recyclable commodities and some food waste over the first half of the year, which seemed to be levelling off. It was the view of Districts that tonnages would stay at this level through the rest of the financial year. Regarding paper and

card, despite a lot of people being at home, there had been a reduction being presented at the kerbside. Based on the forecast, the return of the reserves would cover the additional costs. Other reserves were being considered to determine if there could be further returns; the position was being kept under review.

- A Member asked about kerbside waste and the longer term impacts on homeworking on tonnages and reserves in this financial year and future years. Until a vaccine was available, it was suggested, people would still be working from home some of the time. There would still be increased levels of waste collected from the kerbside. However, it was expected that the tonnage would not be as high as they were earlier in the year. The figures used to update the model were on a five year forecast so Districts would be looking to incorporate their longer term view for the MTFP. Planning would then be undertaken to deal with the extra tonnages.
- A Member enquired about HWRC provision/Covid-19 legislation during the current lockdown period. It was reported that in the original lockdown, a visit to a HWRC did not meet the legal definition of an essential journey so a decision was made to close the sites. On 2 May 2020 the sites reopened with social distancing measures in place on a phased basis and were fully operational from the end of June 2020. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) developed guidance on how sites could be operated safely and subsequently changed the Covid-19 legislation so that a visit to a waste disposal facility met the definition of an essential journey. From a legal perspective there was no reason to close the sites. For this lockdown period, it had been confirmed the sites would remain open. Work was taking place with Suez the contractor to keep all of the sites open. However, the critical factor was staff sickness and absence. To run a site safely, there should be a minimum of three operatives available. Should it drop below that level then there could be a need to close one or two sites.
- The Member asked a further question about the use of the sites for the remainder of the year. It was advised that based on the monthly data tracking, tonnages would be similar to the overall level as last year. The only difference being this would have been received over ten months rather than 12 months. The spike in deliveries were definitely across May, June and July 2020. This had returned to a more normative level from August 2020 onwards. It was envisaged that tonnages would remain at this level.
- Should the public defer a visit to the HWRC until after the current lockdown and in light of the Christmas break and staff sickness and absence, a Member asked if there was a potential problem. It was reported that Christmas and the New Year were busy times at HWRCs. The advice given to the public was that the sites were open and were there to be used. The main guidance was about sorting waste before arriving at the sites so people could be in and out as quickly as possible and observing the social distancing measures in place. People would be encouraged to think about if they really needed to visit a HWRC and if it was an essential journey. Contingency for the post-Christmas period was about keeping the main reception sites (where Districts delivered) and HWRCs open. If a HWRC was attached to a main Council reception site, this would be closed as a priority to remove any traffic build up that would interfere with Council deliveries but look to move staff from that site onto the other facilities so the coverage could be maximised. A plan was being developed.

- A Member asked for further details about the financial planning for Brexit and the potential shortage of heavy good vehicle (HGV) drivers. It was explained that within the figures (draft budget) there was a sum of £2.75m, which was under review in light of District tonnage projections and direction of travel with Brexit. The main risk was around access to markets for recyclable material. Most of the waste was dealt with in the UK but should there be problems with exporting then there would be domestic market competition for capacity. This was the reason for the contingency figure.
- A Member asked if more bins at home would be introduced and if the cost had been built into the forecast. It was reported that this was part of the National Waste and Resources Strategy, which would be available for consultation around Easter 2021. In the first consultation, Government had a preference for prescribing a certain range of materials that should be collected, the way they should be collected and also the frequency of collection. It was anticipated in the next consultation, Government would be looking for separate food collections, currently collected by Districts with garden waste, which would result in additional costs. The other area was the frequency of collections particularly residual waste, which also could incur additional costs. The potential timeline for implementation for Government was 2023. However, there could be a possible delay given the current circumstances. Government had also advised that any additional operating costs for Local Authorities would be met from the Extended Producer Responsibility, which was a tax on the packaging producers. There had been no clarity on how this would work, how much funding would be available and long that would be for. Further detail was awaited in the next round of consultations.
- The Chair asked about future year's budgets and what decisions would Districts need to make waste disposal cheaper or was it not possible. It was advised that should the waste strategy require separate collections of food waste, then that waste would need an anaerobic digestion (AD) process. Capacity would need to be procured or a new facility would need building and operating. Procuring capacity would cost approximately £6m more per year; building an AD plant would cost around £30m. From a Collection Authority perspective, it was a significant cost. However, this cost would be funded from the Extended Producer Responsibility.
- In terms of waste disposal costs, previous to the current arrangements with Suez, there was the Private Financial Initiative (PFI) contact. If that had remained in place, the annual cost would be approximately £200m. The contact was terminated early and savings were made and that was reflected in the forecast budget being considered for next year, which was £162m. There had already been a significant saving. Work was underway with Suez to see if there could be any commercial changes to the contract to make savings, there were also opportunities to bring additional waste in but outside of that there was limited to scope to drive out further savings.

RESOLVED/-

That the report be received and noted.

CI&R/35/20

WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE 2020/21 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Members considered the committee work programme for 2020/21. Members were asked to contact the Chair with their suggestions.

In December 2020 GMCA, fire and transport budgets would be scrutinised along with a report on full fibre/digital and Brexit. In January 2021, the Committee would further consider Brexit, budgets and the waste strategy.

RESOLVED/-

That Members contact the Chair with ideas for the work programme.

CI&R/36/20

GMCA REGISTER OF KEY DECISIONS

RESOLVED/-

That the GMCA Register of Key Decisions be noted.

CI&R/37/20

DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

All meetings would be held virtually on the following dates at 4.00 pm:

- 8 December 2020
- 19 January 2021
- 9 February 2021
- 16 March 2021

CI&R/38/20

COVID-19 RESPONSE FROM THE GMCA TO DATE AND PLANS GOING FORWARD

The Greater Manchester Mayor joined the meeting to provide a verbal update, discuss the GMCA's overall response to Covid-19 to date and broad plans for going forward.

A question and answer session took place, which was noted as:

- Members thanked the Greater Manchester Mayor and Leaders for their work during the pandemic.
- A Member raised homeless support going into the second lockdown. It was explained that support was available but further clarity from Government was needed. So far, 2k people had been supported in the Everyone In programme; the results had been fantastic. The current position was that there were 480 people still in a single room hotel, halls of residence or hostel type provision. A Bed Every Night (ABEN) had been made Covid-19 safe and housed

480 people. In addition, there were over 3k families in temporary accommodation. The number of rough sleepers in September 2020 was just over 100. Whilst this was a significant reduction since last year, figures were increasing because of the growing economic crisis. The Everyone In programme had developed into the Protect Programme, which Government launched last week. Manchester and Salford would be the two Districts in Greater Manchester, which qualified for support. Further details on the allocation were awaited along with the allocation for the cold weather payment. Local Government funding was tight and it was unknown if all people could be helped this winter. The position was being considered.

- A discussion took place about financial support for the music and hospitality industry. There was also a concern raised about the airport. It was reported that the £60m support announced by the Government for Greater Manchester could potentially be accessed. Work was underway with Excluded UK to launch a national effort to get more support. The 10.00 pm curfew was highlighted and if this was revisited how it could potentially further support the industries. United We Stream was being re-established, which also provided a small amount of support for venues.

- A Member asked about transport infrastructure, the Metrolink, future capacity and ticketing. It was noted that the recovery of public transport was hard to predict but it was envisaged that commuting levels would not be the same pre pandemic. In terms of flexible ticketing, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) had launched the Clipper ticket. This was for flexible workers, part-time workers or anyone who travelled regularly but not every day, however, further ticketing products for the new ways of working were needed. In the longer term, Government were subsidising buses, Metrolink was also being subsidised for the loss of revenue until March 2020 and there was a package to support rail. Discussions with Government about continued support and levelling up for the transport system were needed. Linked to clear air it was hoped that recovery would be used to accelerate the change in the public transport. It was anticipated that a London style system with a cap on unlimited bus and tram travel would be adopted. A decision on bus reform would be made in the near future.

- The Chair asked how small town centres would bounce back from the pandemic and what resources did the public sector have to help. It was suggested there could be a differential impact. However, some town centres could see an uplift as people were living and working more locally whereas others could be hit quite hard. The City Centre was a worry given the current context and its recovery. The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) did account for the regeneration of town centres. Further thought should also be given to multi-agency master planning to create more residential accommodation within some towns, which would be linked to public transport. The idea of a Mayoral Corporation was open to any District and could be a way forward. Progress was being made on the GMSF, there had been a major reduction in green belt (-60%). Government had been clear that further Greenbelt funding would be linked to having a strategic plan in place; this was critically important.

- A Member asked how much of the £60m Government funding would be made available for the development of brownfield land taking account of spend in other areas such as homelessness. It was reported that on brown field £80m was available over this year and that had been allocated. There was also a further pipeline of projects for brownfield. However, Government had made it clear that there would be no further brownfield funding if a plan was not in place. Regarding homelessness funding, it was suggested that Districts had not been fully financed and some GMCA resources had been used for the Everyone In programme. However, Government work in this area had been positive.
- Whilst some Members were unhappy that the Greater Manchester Mayor initially rejected the £60m of Government funding, other Members were fully supportive of his actions. After negotiating with Government and accepting the £60m of Government funding, further backdated funding for Tier 2 and an increase to 80% Furlough to March 2021 had been announced.

RESOLVED/-

That the Greater Manchester Mayor be thanked for his update and attending the meeting.