

CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUPMEETING, 11TH JANUARY, 2008

Present – Councillors Morris (Chairman), Adia, Hayes, Rushton, Sherrington and J. Walsh.

Also in attendance

Mr. S. Harriss	Chief Executive
Ms. S. Curran	Deputy Director of Corporate Resources
Mr. J. Farr	Principal Policy and Improvement Officer
Mr. J. Kerambrum	Democratic Services Officer

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Chadwick.

Councillor Morris in the Chair

9. CITY REGION UPDATE

The Chief Executive gave a presentation that updated the Policy Development Group on the progress of the proposed development City Region plans.

By way of background information the presentation explained that, following the Local Government White Paper 2006, support had grown for the benefits the City Region initiative could bring to local communities. The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) had demonstrated it's vision and ambition for the City Region plans which had developed debate within Bolton.

Members were advised that proposals had been drawn up by an AGMA sub group regarding the Governance arrangements. A series of reports titled the Heads of Terms had been written and following agreement within individual authorities the relevant officers would be tasked with drawing up a draft constitution.

The presentation then went on to outline the following potential benefits of the City Region proposals:-

- economic prosperity;
- the power of sub-regional governance and perspective;
- potential devolution;
- Bolton shaping and leading the agenda;
- improved outcomes in key areas for local people; and
- improved skills and experience for Elected Members and officers.

The presentation also went on to outline the potential issues in relation to the City Regions proposals:-

- ensuring existing powers remained at Borough level;
- the amount of delegation to Bolton;
- the threat of Bolton's voice being lost;
- the poor public perception of additional tiers of governance; and
- the capacity of members and officers to undertake any additional work.

In terms of the next steps for the City Region initiative, Bolton would see a continuation of the debate over the benefits and issues entering the scheme and in order to support these proposals the benefits would need to be realised and the potential issues reduced. Discussions would also continue on the production of a draft constitution which would also offer further detail on the City Region proposals.

Members discussed the need for all groups to agree on the potential benefits and issues and the need for these to be finalised into a further report that provided the relevant detail.

Members were in agreement that the key to the debate would be if the constitution, once drafted, would give Bolton the required influence and whether the potential benefits would outweigh the potential issues.

It was agreed that the report be noted and that a further report be submitted to the next meeting of the Executive providing further detail on the potential benefits and issues of City Region.

10. THE MANCHESTER AREA AGREEMENT

The Chief Executive submitted a report that outlined the purpose, goals and future timetable for the Manchester Area Agreement (MAA).

By way of background information the MAA had been developed by the ten local authorities in the Greater Manchester sub-region and contained proposals designed to match the area's significant levels of economic need with the substantial opportunities created by economic growth between 2008 and 2011.

The report stated the Government's recent sub-national economic review recognised the key role the UK's major cities played as the driver of growth and as the best scale at which to address economic challenges.

The presentation explained that, although economic need in Greater Manchester was amongst the highest in the country, the levels of economic opportunity in Greater Manchester was substantial. The MAA would have the role of matching this economic need with opportunities. This would tackle deprivation and inequality and would work to ensure that the sub-region's

economic potential was not constrained by the labour market, housing, congestion or environmental factors.

Members were informed that the Executive Board would be created by April, 2008, which would comprise of the leaders of the ten authorities, to coordinate conurbation-wide action and integration. This would be supported by a Business Leadership Council, providing private sector input to the board. Seven strategic commissions would oversee actions to achieve the agreed targets.

The report stated that in order to achieve these targets, the MAA identified a total of twelve evidence-based proposals for the next three years, these were grouped under the following four themes:-

- Skills and Employment;
- Enterprise, Innovation and Sustainable Growth;
- Place, Infrastructure and Housing; and
- Targets and Incentives.

The report highlighted the benefits that the MAA would bring to Bolton which included the following:-

- the high degree of synergy that already existed between the MAA's and those of Bolton; and
- the MAA would allow Bolton, to access new opportunities for more flexible and innovative service provision, which would not be available outside the MAA.

The report concluded with a proposed timetable of events for the implementation of the MAA which would be completed with the MAA being signed off by Ministers which would coincide with the sign-off of the second generation of Local Area Agreement's across Greater Manchester.

Members discussed the need to promote the benefits of the MAA to the people of Bolton.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

(The meeting started at 2.00 p.m. and finished at 3.35 p.m.)