

CORPORATE RESOURCES, STRATEGY AND BUDGET POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

MEETING, 5TH NOVEMBER, 2014

Present – Councillors Iqbal (Chairman), Adia (Vice-Chairman), Cox, Greenhalgh, Martin (as deputy for Councillor Hayes), Morris, Peel, Spencer and Mrs. Thomas.

Also in Attendance

Mr. S. Harriss	-	Chief Executive
Ms. S. Johnson	-	Borough Treasurer
Mr. A. Jennings	-	Democratic Services Manager

Councillor Iqbal in the Chair

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Hayes.

21. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Policy Development Group held on 18th August, 2014 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

22. FINANCIAL FORECAST AND BUDGET PROCESS 2015-17

The Chief Executive submitted a report that outlined the Financial Forecast for the next two years, including the projected requirement for savings of up to £43m by 2016/17, together with the proposed strategy for delivering this budget as a basis for consultation.

The report outlined the following:-

- the context for the Council's Policy and Budget for 2015-17;
- strategic proposals for meeting the financial and policy context; and
- the detailed process for consultation with the public, trade unions and staff;

On this basis the specific level of reductions from each corporate or departmental area were as follows:-

- Corporate -£15.9 – 17.9m
- Adult Social Care - £6.25 - £7.75m

- Children's - £2.5 - 3.5m
- Development and Regeneration - £2.3 – 2.5m
- Environment - £5.3-6.3m
- Chief Executive's - £2.25m
- Cross-cutting - £4-5m.

The Council was intending to commence formal consultation immediately on the overall budget proposals with a view to reporting back to Council in February 2015. Consultation would include:-

- formal consultation with the Trades Unions through the SLJCC and subsequent Corporate Employee Relations Meetings, supported by DJCCs, for the duration of the consultation period;
- a detailed explanation of the overall budget position and allocation of savings in the next issue of Scene, to be distributed to every household in November. Scene would also be used to explain to people how they could feed in their views to the consultation ;
- development of a public consultation survey which would be posted on-line and also posted to 10,000 targeted households;
- an organised briefing event for the public which would be held in December 2014, to explain the budget and the options put forward and to seek people's views;
- target presentations/discussions with specific groups such as the Third Sector Forum, Business Ratepayers, schools and other groups as appropriate; and
- a comprehensive communications campaign for staff to ensure every employee understood the proposals and how to feed in during consultation. This would involve a letter to every member of staff from the Chief Executive; a special edition of the staff magazine, Bob and briefing sessions held by Directors in each department.

The PDG agreed the report for submission to the Cabinet.

23. GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY – DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT

The Chief Executive briefed members as to the content of the devolution settlement as agreed with the Government.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Government had formulated the settlement in order to deliver increased economic growth and improved public services which would require Greater Manchester to build on and extend the role of the Combined Authority to which existing Government functions would be devolved. It would also introduce a new elected Mayor in

2017 who would work as part of the Combined Authority with responsibility for new devolved powers and resources.

Local authorities in Greater Manchester would retain all of their existing powers but the agreement would provide additional tools to create high quality places where people chose to live, work and do business and to reform the way that public services were delivered to improve outcomes.

The agreement was based on a series of principles-

- everything contained in the deal was designed to achieve higher sustainable levels of economic growth and social inclusion along with public service reform to deliver the Greater Manchester Strategy;
- devolution was required to improve the competitiveness of the Greater Manchester economy and to reform public services;
- the agreement was not about taking away local government services but devolving down to the City Region the functions of Government;
- it did not add a new layer of governance. The agreed model built on the Greater Manchester model of integrated governance; and
- the agreement was based on a road map which was needed to create the conditions for both devolution of powers and changes in governance and included the following:-

1. an appointed Mayor as the 11th member of the Combined Authority would be put in place as soon as the necessary parliamentary procedure to amend the Combined Authority Order had been passed;
2. the Government would bring forward legislation to create the role of a directly elected Mayor (which would also take on the role currently covered by the Police and Crime Commissioner) which it was anticipated would be in place by 2017. The Mayor would be the Chair of the Combined Authority and the Cabinet with the 10 Leaders having portfolios of responsibility allocated by the Mayor. The Mayor would receive newly devolved powers on transport, housing and planning;
3. the devolution of some new responsibilities was possible without legislation and those would be passed to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority now;
4. the rest of the powers, funding for large strategic projects post 2016/17 and future funding from the revised Earnback deal would be conditional on Greater Manchester implementing the city region Mayor model; and
5. there was the opportunity to agree further devolution in the months and years ahead.

The directly-elected Mayor would be responsible for the new powers in relation to transport, planning, housing and policing but would be required to consult the GMCA Cabinet on his/her strategies, which it may reject if two-thirds of

members agreed to do so. The statutory spatial framework would require approval by a unanimous vote of the Mayor's Cabinet.

Further work was required on all the detailed implementation of these changes. New legislation was needed before transport and planning powers could be transferred and there would be a transitional arrangement of an appointed mayor who would assume some of the responsibilities of an elected mayor.

The Chief Executive informed members that a timetable and process would be submitted to a future meeting of the PDG

The Council had been invited to submit comments on the above principles and the Devolution Agreement by the 15th January 2015.

(The meeting started at 10.00 a.m and finished at 11.30 a.m)