

**GMCA AND AGMA SCRUTINY POOL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2016  
IN THE LORD MAYOR'S PARLOUR, TOWN HALL, MANCHESTER**

**PRESENT**

Bolton Council	Cllr Andrew Morgan
Bury MBC	Cllr Jane Black
Manchester CC	Cllr Ahmed Ali Cllr Angeliki Stogia Cllr Matt Strong
Oldham MBC	Cllr Cath Ball Cllr Colin McLaren
Rochdale MBC	Cllr Sara Rowbotham
Salford CC	Cllr John Ferguson Cllr John Walsh
Stockport MBC	Cllr Wendy Wild Cllr John McGahan
Tameside MBC	Cllr Gill Peet
Trafford MBC	Cllr Barry Brotherton Cllr Pam Dixon
Wigan MBC	Cllr John O'Brien (Chair) Cllr Pam Stewart

**IN ATTENDANCE**

GMCA/ Leader Tameside MBC	Cllr Kieran Quinn
GMCA/ Leader Bolton MBC	Cllr Cliff Morris
GM PSR Team	Andrew Lightfoot
GMPCC	Jayne Stephenson
GMFRS	Andrea Heffernan
GMWDA	John Bland
TfGM	David Daughney
GMCA	Janice Gotts
GMIST	Julie Connor
	Allan Sparrow

**15/67 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Alan Bury (Bolton); Ian Bevan (Bury); Neil Butterworth & Robert Clegg (Rochdale); Jillian Collinson (Salford); Maria Bailey (Tameside); Jonathan Coupe (Trafford) and Edward Houlton (Wigan)

**15/68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor John O'Brien declared an interest in the item concerning the GMCA and AGMA Budgets 2016/17 as he was Chair of Service Delivery at GMFRS.

**15/69 MINUTES OF THE GMCA AND AGMA SCRUTINY POOL MEETING HELD ON 15 JANUARY 2016**

The Minutes of the GMCA and AGMA Scrutiny Pool meeting held on 15 January 2016 were submitted for consideration.

**RESOLVED/-**

To approve the Minutes of the GMCA and AGMA Scrutiny Pool meeting held on 15 January 2016.

**15/70 SCRUTINY POOL WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16**

A report detailing the Scrutiny Pool's work programme for the coming months was submitted.

**RESOLVED/-**

That the contents of the work programme and items identified for future meetings in 2016 be noted.

**15/71 REVIEW OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN**

Councillor Cliff Morris provided Members with an update on the review of services for children which formed part of the GM Devolution Agreement. The summer budget 2015 had announced that as part of the Devolution Agreement both the Government and GM authorities would work together to undertake a fundamental review of all services for children. He highlighted the fact that along with health and social care the review of children's services was a significant priority for the Devolution Agreement and reform across GM.

Andrew Lightfoot added that all ten authorities were committed to work together on this process as the scale of the review would be significant, second only after the health and social care review. He informed Members that there were three drivers behind the review:

- Firstly, The Government and the GM authorities had identified that there were enormous financial pressures. Children's services in the previous spending review had

been protected but this was no longer sustainable. Financial modelling had shown that if the spend remained the same there would be a cost pressure of £40m by 2020

- Secondly, The Government had announced that it was looking at radical options for the future of children's services
- Thirdly, There was the impact of school reforms, the rise of 'free schools' and the role of the GMCA and GM authorities to ensure adequate school provision existed in the right areas. This issue needed to be linked to spatial planning and housing.

Members noted that Jim Taylor, Chief Executive Salford CC would be the lead chief executive for this review with Charlotte Ramsden from GMP undertaking the co-ordinating role.

Members were then taken through the work streams for the review and a brief outline of the teams involved was given. Members' attention was also drawn to the fact that in terms of 'looked after children' there were significant variations across each authority that could not be explained by demographics. The review hoped to address these issues and find ways to ensure savings can be delivered.

#### **Questions and comments from the Scrutiny Pool included-**

***Q. A Member highlighted GM's need for a skilled workforce to work with young people and asked how further information on the review could be obtained?***

A. It was reported that the review would start with a blank page and authorities would be asked to work closely together in order to learn from each other and identify potential options. Andrew Lightfoot added that he was happy to meet the Member.

***Q. A Member referred to that fact that the workforce of GM authorities would be key to the delivery of this review. He expressed a concern that the seven work streams would have implications on the workforce as they had a lot of work to do already?***

A. The Member was informed that Gail Hopper (DCS, Rochdale) had developed a detailed work programme which set out the levels of responsibility for officers and this which could be shared with the Member.

***Q. The Chair commented that he also had concerns regarding the capacity to undertake this review. He felt that the early introduction of the new arrangements was key and the need to ensure it was fully linked to health and social care. He also commented on the need to get people to start life well and he did not see any reference in the report about this?***

A. Members were informed that the ten GM Directors of Children's Services were engaged in this process and this work would overlap with their day job. However, there were significant resources underpinning this work and the GMCA had allocated funding to help with the review. The DCSs were close to the work but not necessarily undertaking the day to day activity.

In terms of securing early initiatives it was reported that the Government saw the work to take place across GM as a trailblazer to develop and implement an integrated approach to preventative services for children and young people by April 2017. The Government were also aware that a funding ask would come from the review and it was hoped that by April 2016 GM would have a clear proposition regarding the Central Government funding required.

- Q. A Member referred to the fact that for many years authorities have been working with chaotic families and there should be evidence showing whether or not any of the activities undertaken had worked. Young people continue to get involved with crime etc and these figures were rising. She asked that the review did not just focus on structures but focus on the delivery of services.*
- Q. A Member referred to the work undertaken via 'every child matters' which was a targeted approach to delivering services to children. Would the future review find space for this level of support. Schools were also an important element and she hoped that any future framework developed would hold partners to account?*
- A. Councillor Morris reported that a further report would come back to Members on the review. Discussions would take place with Government on their policies around the provision of free schools as local government felt that their introduction did not work as these schools were often constructed in areas where they were not needed. He added that the next report would include plans for the future which Members would be asked to scrutinise.

The Chair welcomed the report but highlighted concerns regarding employee capacity. Local Government had seen significant cuts with staff being asked to do more. He felt that as a Scrutiny Committee it was Members responsibility to ensure care for employees.

A comment was made that this review was an opportunity to improve and change lives for young people. The Pool needed to look at the bigger picture and not look at elements in isolation and this should be reflected in all the work streams.

- Q. A Member asked for a commitment from Government that this work was not just about changing thresholds?*
- A. Andrew Lightfoot confirmed that the Government were committed to achieving better outcomes.

#### **RESOLVED/-**

1. To note the report.
2. That a further report be submitted to include detailed plans and a timetable for the review of children's services across GM.

#### **15/72 GMCA AND AGMA BUDGETS 2016/17**

Councillor Kieran Quinn reported that the financial settlement for local authorities had been issued on 18 December 2015. As predicted this would be a challenging settlement with further reductions in resources. However, there was an opportunity for GM to accept a four year settlement and this was being carefully considered. GM faced significant issues for its resources and significant risks i.e. hospital judicial appeals. Councillor Quinn added that before a paper could come to the GMCA authorities needed to understand the real impact of reductions.

Members were also informed that there would be a range of announcements from Government regarding arrangements for GM's elected Mayor and the successful

candidate would have a significant role in managing resources and effectively become the 11<sup>th</sup> Member of the GMCA.

GM had significant budgetary challenges across all areas and the GMCA would have a co-ordinating role in order to ensure that the city region grew. GM had to ensure elements were in place to be a truly modern city. There were financial challenges but GM was in the best position to address the problems.

Members were taken through the GMCA and AGMA Budgets.

### GMCA Transport Revenue Budget and the Non Transport Revenue Budgets 2016/17

David Daughney took Members through the transport budget review process and levy. This presentation included:

- The key issues facing the transport budget
- The key areas of spend in the budget
- In terms of the non transport revenue budget an outline was given of known priorities/pressures and the risks
- Proposed savings for 2016/17 across budget headings
- The revised overview for 2016/17 (revised position if all savings were taken)
- AGMA and GMCA non transport revenue budget headings 2016/17
- AGMA and GMCA non transport revenue reserves.

The following questions were raised:

***Q. A Member asked where the issue of smart ticketing was shown in the budget and was TfGM continuing with the scheme?***

A. Members were informed that the contract with ATOS to develop smart ticketing had been terminated and a settlement had been reached with the company. The ongoing costs of smart ticketing would be met from the overall transport budget. Since the last time this issue had been reported to Members TfGM had developed along with Metrolink an app to allow passengers to purchase tram tickets by mobile phone.

***Q. Members expressed concern that despite ATOS failing to develop smart ticketing system for GM, TfGM still reached a financial settlement with the company to end the contract. It was felt that the recently developed Metrolink app was not smart ticketing?***

A. Cllr Quinn reported that a line had been put in the budget to make smart ticketing happen. The GMCA shared the frustration expressed by Members as it had been six years since the proposal was made. The Metrolink app was welcome but if GM wanted to be a modern city region then the smart ticketing system needed to be right. He added that the GMCA would now be taking on oversight of the development of smart ticketing.

***Q. The Chair commented that a lot of money had been spent over six years to develop a smart ticketing system and TfGM needed to be accountable for the failure to deliver it. Members were disappointed about how the project was handled and the fact that a settlement had been reached with ATOS despite them failing to deliver the contract?***

- A. Councillor Quinn added that the GMCA was only made aware of the settlement after the a deal had been reached hence the GMCA would now have oversight of this issue.

### GMCA Capital Budget 2016/17

David Daughney reported that the GMCA had agreed a GMCA Transport Capital budget of £291,625 and a Non-Transport Capital budget of £37,679 for 2016/17. The presentation also included a breakdown of the GMCA capital budget funding.

### GMFRS

*(At this point councillor Colin McLaren took the Chair as Councillor John O'Brien had declared an interest.)*

Andrea Heffernan reported that GMFRS was in the lowest quartile of council tax in their class of authority and GMFRS were looking to increase the precept by 1.99%. This figure had been agreed by the GMFRS Authority. In terms of the revenue budget it was reported that savings had been identified to meet the £5.279m shortfall in the budget. This included some front line staff reductions.

The following questions were raised:

**Q. A Member asked if the front line staff reductions meant GM would not be fully covered?**

- A. It was reported that any savings found across the service would be ploughed back into the front line service to ensure GM was covered. There was a need for GMFRS to respond to the budget gap although every attempt would be made to reduce the impact. However, instances like the recent flooding had not helped.

**Q. A Member asked if GMFRS had undertaken a risk management analysis on the impact of the cuts and what was the outcome?**

- A. Members were informed that GMFRS had looked at historical incidents and modelled potential risks. It was clear that the cuts would affect some response times. Members were informed that a public consultation exercise on the cuts had just commenced for a 12 week period.

**Q. A Member highlighted the fact that response times would depend on how far appliances had to travel and he asked if this was likely to be longer than the standard response time of 17 minutes?**

- A. Members were informed that GMFRS were merging roles and devolving a lot of responsibilities locally to ensure the service responded to all incidents. Additional work around prevention and first aid would also continue.

**Q. Members commented that GMFRS had recently recruited new fire officers at a time when a number of long serving officers were being retired and did this mean that the service would suffer due to the loss of that experience.**

- A. It was reported that many officers in the service were now reaching the retirement age and although it was accepted that it would take time for younger officers to gain the same level of skill as the retiring officers. It was reported that GMFRS was not looking at compulsory redundancy for front line staff and look to diversify across the workforce.

Councillor Quinn informed Members that the Chair of the GMFRS Authority had made it clear that GMFRS resources were stretched. A bid to the Home Office for a precept rise like the one granted to GMP had not been successful. The GMFRS Authority had undertaken significant work to ensure people remain safe and ensure GM resilience. This was challenging and the situation with Central Government austerity measures would create more challenges in 2017/18 and 2018/19.

### GM Police and Crime Commissioner

Jayne Stephenson provided members with a presentation which set out the budget overview for the Police and Crime Commissioner which was facing cuts of £30.2m in 2016/17. The presentation set out key budget assumptions and treasurer peer review discussion areas.

The following question was raised:

**Q. A Members asked whether the heightened threat of terrorism had produced additional pressures on the budget i.e. the additional work to be undertaken to combat radicalisation.**

A. Jayne Stephenson reported that counter terrorism activities for the region were based in GM but funded by the Home Office. Most of the prevention work regarding radicalisation was undertaken through GMP's Project Challenger.

### Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority

John Bland provided Members with a presentation on the GMWDA's budget for 2016/17. The presentation included the budget context and December 2015 waste submissions per authority (nine authorities as Wigan had a separate waste disposal agreement). An update was also given on potential recycling at the kerbside and the medium term financial plan to 2020/21. Members were informed that additional pressures had been put on the budget due to the aftermath of recent floods (predicted £2.5m overspend).

The following questions were raised:

**Q. A Member asked for progress being made on recycling and the impact this had on the budget?**

A. It was reported that every 1% increase in recycling equated to £1m of savings in the city region.

**Q. A Member asked why it was not possible to recycle most of the plastic used in food packaging – was this because it was not cost effective?**

A. It was reported that low oil prices had resulted in stockpiles of recyclable plastic material. This was an issue for the Government to resolve. GM needed a long term plan for waste disposal and more importantly increase the current levels of recycling. Members were informed that any changes to be made to future waste contracts would become part of the scrutiny process.

**Q. A Member hoped that the levels of resources reported were appropriate to meet GM's recycling needs. She added that the presentation indicated that GMWDA predicted a target of 50.26% for recycling submissions in 2017/18 and hoped this was true recycling and not just wastes being diverted from landfill.**

The Chair added that there had been recent incidents when stockpiles of recycled plastic and paper had resulted in major fires taking place. These incidents presented serious environmental issues such as a heightened risk of pollution in local water courses. He felt that the Environment Agency should look more into this issue for the public's protection.

**RESOLVED/-**

1. To note the GMCA and AGMA Budgets for 2016/17.
2. That officers be thanked for their informative presentations

**15/73 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2015/16**

The schedule of meetings for 2015/16 was agreed as-

11 March 2016

8 April 2016

10 June 2016

All meetings will be held 1:00pm - 3:00pm at Manchester Town Hall

Chair