

Council Meeting – 21 October 2015

ITEM 7 - Joint Authority Questions:-

1. Transport

Could the Authority's representative on the Transport for Greater Manchester Committee update members on the consultation and review around the issue of the carriage of dogs on Metrolink? Will Bury's representatives be supporting the view strongly expressed view in the consultation that dogs should be allowed on trams, within sensible restrictions?

Councillor Mary D'Albert

To be answered by Councillor Noel Bayley – Committee for Transport for Greater Manchester Transport representative)

Response:

On 3 July 2015, Members of the Capital Projects and Policy Sub-Committee considered a report entitled 'The Carriage of Non-Assistance Dogs'.

The report provided the background to the work conducted by officers, which led to the public consultation on whether to change the existing Byelaws and Conditions of Carriage.

It was highlighted by some Members that there were still a number of issues unresolved in the report. A further report was requested to be presented at the November meeting of the Sub Committee.

On 6 November 2015 the report is scheduled to be presented. It will provide the background to the current position, seek to address the outstanding issues and provide recommendations.

Following the meeting, the minutes will be available detailing the outcome.

2. Police

Could the Authority's representative on the Police and Crime panel please update members on what impact the current Government spending plans will have on the provision of front-line policing in Greater Manchester and Bury specifically?

Cllr Tim Pickstone

(To be answered by Councillor Connolly – Police and Crime Panel spokesperson)

Response:

As outlined in the motion to be debated today, the current financial situation for policing is bleak.

Since 2010, £134m has been slashed from GMP's budget. We have seen officer numbers fall from 8,100 when the Coalition came to power to less than 6,500 as they currently stand. The Bury division has seen a 14% reduction in officers based on the division.

The government has not yet confirmed the full financial settlement for policing for 2016/17, but we estimate that by 2019, a further £157m will need to be found. This will mean that the amount of funding invested in GMP will have been cut almost in half.

Once the full financial settlement for policing for 2016/17 is finalised, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's budget proposals will be subject to a full public consultation process. I would encourage everyone to have their say and respond.

I am committed to continuing the work we do with the Police and other partners in Bury to transform the way we deliver services - to help us meet the challenges that lie ahead. However, I believe that this is becoming increasingly difficult. I am concerned that our most vulnerable will be the hardest hit.

3. Combined Authority

Could the Authority's member of the Combined Authority/AGMA Executive give an update to members on progress being made to improve openness and transparency around meetings of the CA and AGMA?

Cllr Tim Pickstone

(To be answered by Councillor Connolly – Combined Authority Member)

Response:

The Combined Authority's plan for Growth and Reform depends on the forging of new relationships between services, residents and businesses across Greater Manchester.

The scale and pace of devolution for the region, and the added interest the agenda has attracted, provides an opportunity to increase our focus on communication, engagement and to coordinate, clarify and strengthen our accountability and transparency.

The Combined Authority recognises the need to ensure that our key stakeholders understand how GM works, how it will benefit them and how they can get involved.

The Combined Authority is also committed to ensuring that elected members and our employees, at all levels, are well informed and are provided with opportunities to support Greater Manchester's Growth and Reform agenda.

Tony Lloyd was appointed as Interim Mayor for Greater Manchester in June and has publically stated his commitment to engaging residents with the work undertaken on behalf of GM.

He holds the designated portfolio responsibility for Communications, and being visible and accountable across the whole of Greater Manchester is a key part of his role.

A review of the GM Scrutiny arrangements was recently undertaken which highlighted the need to ensure that through all its practices the GMCA is accountable, one of the ways it can increase its accountability is through Combined Authority members being called to Scrutiny to answer questions around their portfolio area of responsibility.

The review also specified that the Combined Authority should be accessible to members and the public through as many means as possible, in response, the Combined Authority have made a commitment to web-streaming their meetings as soon as practically possible.

The Combined Authority have recently invested in a small, dedicated communications resource. This team will work with individual council communications teams to make sure residents throughout GM are aware of the work we do and the decisions we make.

Later this month we'll be launching a new GMCA website that will make it even easier to access information - this will also include updates on all current GMCA and AGMA projects and programmes, information about how decisions are made and easy access to committee papers.