

Cuts in Manchester 2016/17 Briefing 1

27/10/2015

The following is Macc's understanding and observations on the current position. It is important to note that this is changing all the time. We hope to be able to provide more detailed information in the next few weeks.

Level of Cuts

There is still a very great deal of uncertainty about the level of cuts that Manchester City Council (MCC) will face and the period over which the cuts will have to be made. The final figure will only be known when the Financial Settlement is published by the government. Even the timing for this announcement is not certain: it could be late December or possibly even early January. Unlike previous years, the level of uncertainty is such that the Council is not able to draw up plans based on any predictions about likely or expected figures.

What is clear is that MCC is facing a number of sources of "cost pressure", i.e. increases in costs that will impact on services. These cost pressures means that MCC may need to increase the level of cuts in other services to compensate.

The Manchester Evening News reported in July that MCC was to receive a windfall from Manchester Airports Group of £33 million. MCC has not officially confirmed this or announced how this is to be used, but last year a smaller windfall was used, in part, to reduce the level of cuts.

MCC Approach to Making Cuts

MCC has suffered large cuts for many years now. It is well beyond easy or quick wins and making savings by cutting general costs. MCC faces some very difficult decisions and all options will have to be explored. It seems inevitable that there will be further job losses across the city but can they all continue to be voluntary redundancies?

We are hearing considerable support for the VCS as a partner to MCC. It is recognised that the sector has also done all it can to make cost savings and we have heard both officers and councillors acknowledge the importance of "community assets" and the need to increase their size and effectiveness.

Approximately £9.5 million of cuts in 2016/17 were agreed during the negotiations around cuts last year. Agreements made then may have to be renegotiated.

At Greater Manchester level negotiations with the government continue around transitional funding to reduce the longer-term costs of services, an "invest to save" approach. This may have some impact on the level of cuts required but it may still require changes to existing agreements.

Decision-Making Process

Last year, senior managers were asked by the Executive of the Council to put forward proposals. These proposals were commented on and sent back for revision. When the Executive agreed the proposals they were considered by MCC Scrutiny Committees. At the same time there was an extensive consultation process. The cuts package then went to the Labour Group of councillors for discussion and to a full council meeting for final agreement and ratification.

This year, we are unclear as to what kind of decision-making and consultation process there will be or when it will be announced. With such uncertainty over the timetable, it seems likely that the time available for a formal process will be very limited. The Council needs to set its budget by the end of March or it is breaking the law.

Key Dates

Agendas for Council meetings are published approximately a week before. Dates sometimes change.

All meetings are webcast. (<http://www.manchester.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>)

All meetings are open to the public and organisations can request to speak at Scrutiny Committees.

27/10/15	Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee
27/10/15	Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee
28/10/15	Communities Scrutiny Committee
29/10/15	Health Scrutiny Committee
4/11/15	Executive
18/11/15	Full Council
24/11/15	Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee
24/11/15	Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee
25/11/15	Communities Scrutiny Committee
26/11/15	Health Scrutiny Committee
2/12/15	Executive
15/12/15	Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee
15/12/15	Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee
15/12/15	Labour Group
16/12/15	Communities Scrutiny Committee
17/12/15	Health Scrutiny Committee
06/1/16	Executive
20/01/16	Full Council

Key Resources

[Guide to Scrutiny Committees](#)

[Guide to Lobbying Councillors](#)

[Guide to Filling in MCC Impact Forms](#)

[What to offer](#) (guidance on negotiating a cut in a contract)

Further information will be published in Manchester Community Central's weekly ebulletin.

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