
Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 22 June 2016

Subject: Manchester All-Age Disability Strategy - Equality, Accessibility and Inclusion: Access All Areas

Report of: Strategic Director – Adult Social Care

Summary

This report and the attached Manchester **All-age Disability Strategy - Equality, Accessibility and Inclusion: Access All Areas** sets out our new directions to become a Disabled People Friendly City.

The attached strategy will be formally launched in August 2016 along with the establishment of the All Age Disability Strategy, the Partnership Board and the Engagement Group. This report also gives an overview of the recent consultation, key findings and how the first draft strategy has changed to incorporate the feedback.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and support the strategy launch.

Wards Affected: All

Contact Officers:

Name: Hazel Summers
Position: Strategic Director – Families, Health and Wellbeing
Telephone: 0161 234 3952
E-mail: h.summers@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Zoe Robertson
Position: Lead Commissioner for Disability and Older People
Telephone: 0161 234 1767
E-mail: z.robertson@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Mike Petrou
Position: Commissioning Manager
Telephone: 0161 234 3667
E-mail: m.petrou@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Jon Burke
Position: Seconded to MCC
Telephone: 0161 219 2295
E-mail: jon.Burke@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection):

None

1. Introduction & Background

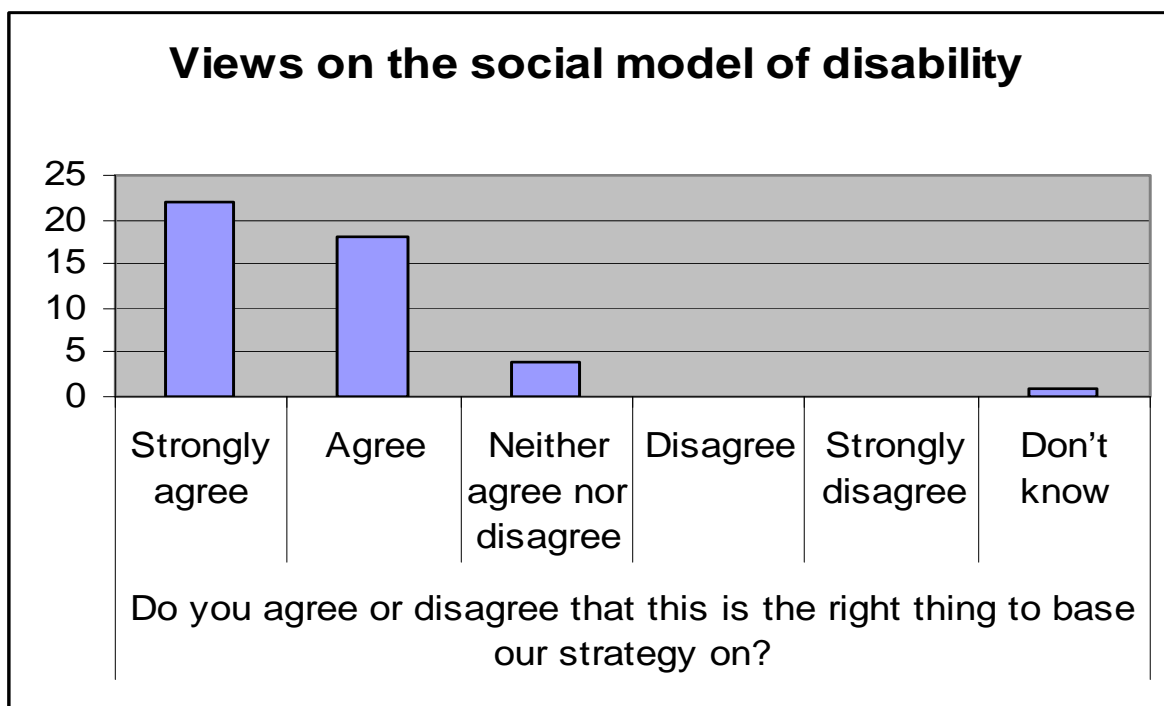
- 1.1 This report provides Committee with an update on the final draft of the All Age Disability Strategy and a summary of the feedback received from the last consultation exercise which ran from the 27th Jan 2016 to the 18th March 2016.
- 1.2 Communities Scrutiny has previously received three detailed updates on work to progress the production of an All-age Disability Strategy. As the work commenced just less than two years ago, it has been deliberately centered on co-production and then consultation – starting with disabled children, adults and their supporters to find out what’s working well and not working well. This ‘bottom-up’ grass roots approach means that we started with finding out the views of Disabled Mancunians and building up the approach incrementally.
- 1.3 Work on the Strategy’s development has been deliberately outward facing, as is the way the strategy has been written so that it reaches out to all parts of society, partners and citizens to encourage them to play their part in Manchester becoming a Disabled People Friendly city. As a result, the Strategy is something that can build on all the elements that make Manchester a great place to live, work, study and visit. The phrase Access All Areas, furthermore, indicates the desire to improve the physical and discriminatory barriers, but as importantly it will also address the cultural change that is required.
- 1.4 Since the final consultation ended in the middle of March 2016, council officers have been working on incorporating the feedback received to develop the final version of the strategy. The feedback has come from Disabled Children & Adults and their supporters, Disabled People’s Organisations (Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People, Breakthrough UK, Manchester Disabled People’s Access Group, Manchester Deaf Centre). In addition Officers received detailed feedback from the Manchester City Council Disabled Staff Group. Comments and, more importantly, suggestions received from the range of groups and individuals have been incorporated into the final draft strategy.
- 1.5 **Jon Burke** – Jon had previously worked for the Manchester Disabled People’s Access Group (MDPAG), Jon was made redundant from MDPAG in February 2016 Jon approached the Strategic Commissioner for Disability Officers about spending time with Commissioners to gain some new experiences. From there, Officers have been working with Jon on the development of the All Age Disability Strategy. Jon’s input has been crucial in analysing and understanding the feedback, but more importantly Jon has brought a different perspective to the overall development of the strategy and the work as a whole.
- 1.6 **Current relevance** - The development of the AADS strongly aligns with the emerging Our Manchester approach. From the outset, this has been a genuine collaboration with disabled people, who have coproduced the

document and are critical partners in its delivery. We as a city have sought to understand what really matters to disabled people, asking straight forward, open questions and the resulting strategy reflects this, covering a broad range of aspects of daily life. The whole strategy has also been developed with a strengths-based mindset, underpinned by the social model of disability which looks at how a person's environment can be enabling, not at what a disabled person can't do. These are some of the hallmarks of what we want to do more widely as part of Our Manchester - different, deeper conversations with residents; services focused around the whole person; and a strengths-based approach.

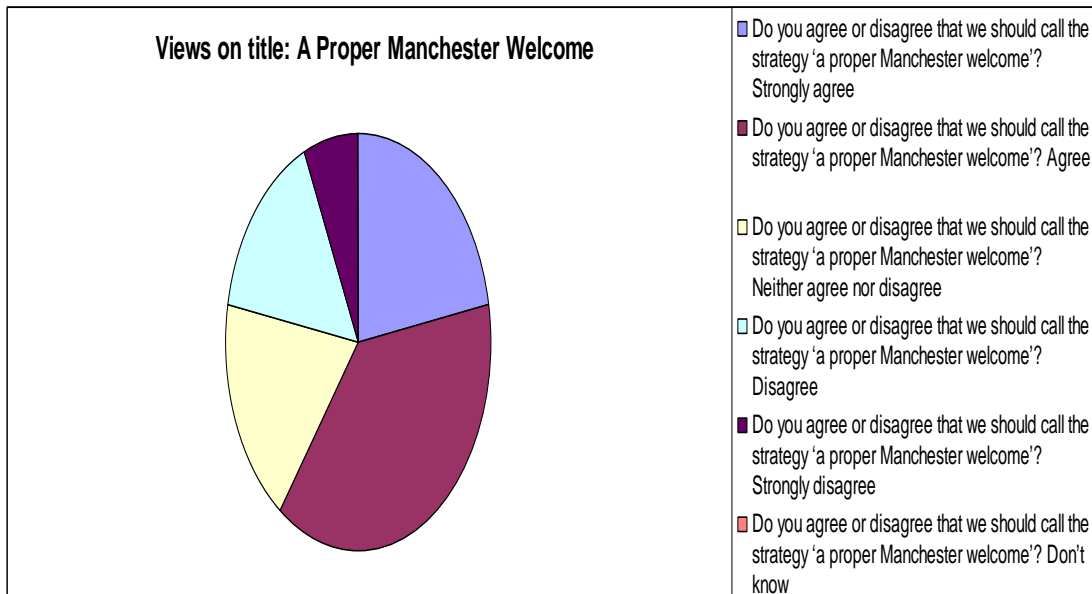
2 What the Consultation Told Us

2.1 This section aims to give a flavour of the responses to the recent consultation exercise on development of the All Age Disability Strategy that was launched at the end of Jan 2016. Around 85 comments were made and submitted either through the council's web based consultation portal or by direct contact with MCC. The responses are grouped broadly below within the subjects the respondents commented on. It is hoped that the version of the strategy being presented to committee with this paper will reflect the comments that have been made, thus confirmation that the strategy really has been developed as a result of a comprehensive co-production process.

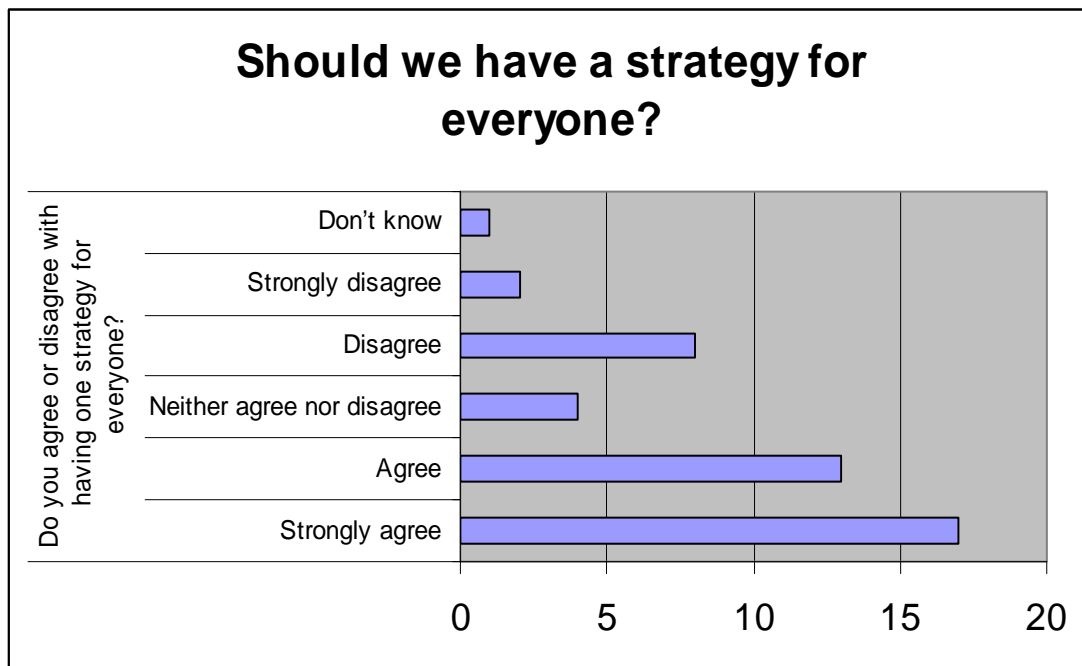
2.1.1 Key findings:



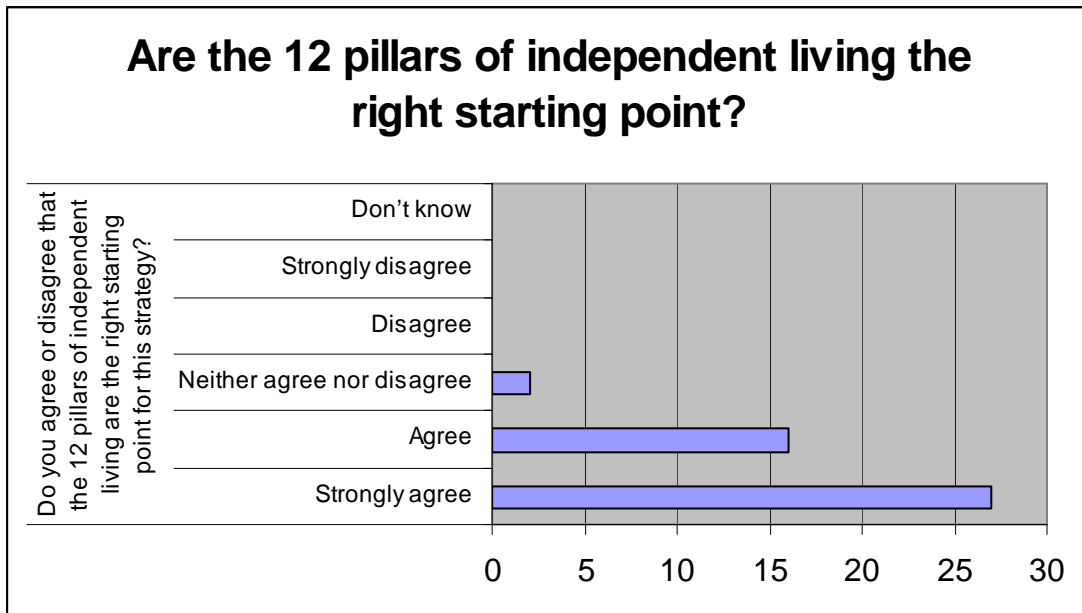
As it can be seen, 89% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that the Strategy should be based on the social model of disability



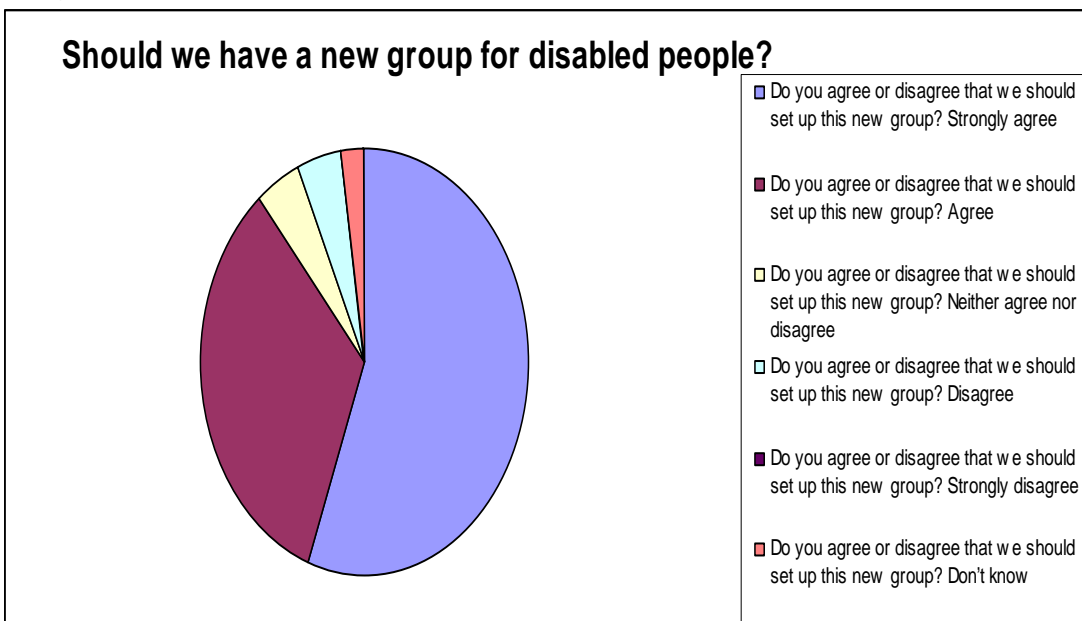
There was a mixed response here with 60% either agreeing or strongly agreeing but with 18% neither agreeing nor disagreeing and a further 16% disagreeing.



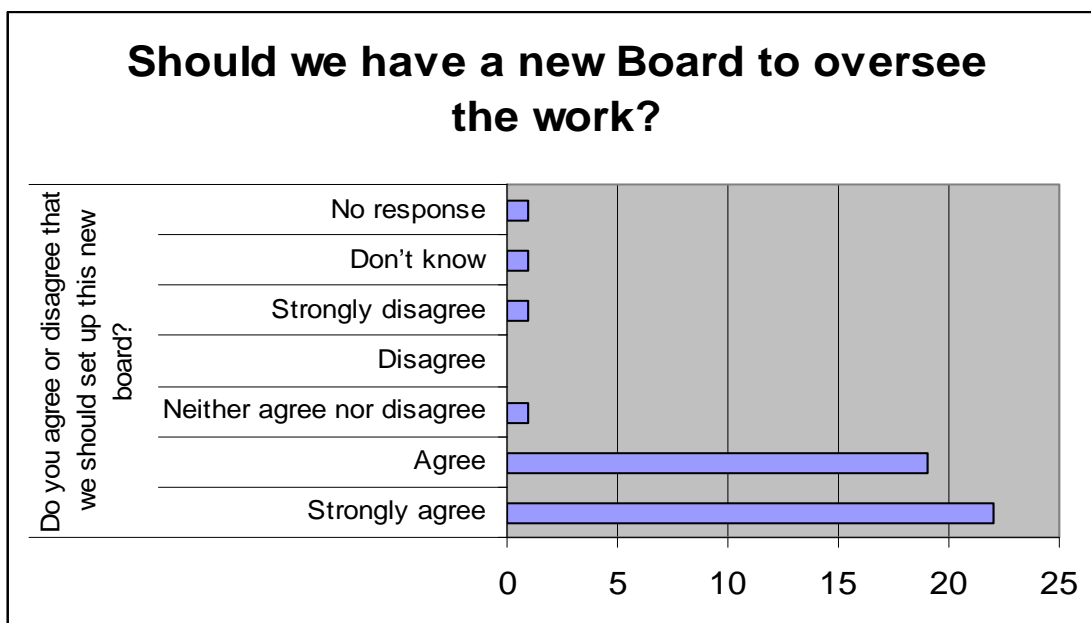
More than two thirds (67%) consider that we should have a strategy for everyone, with a further 22% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this approach.



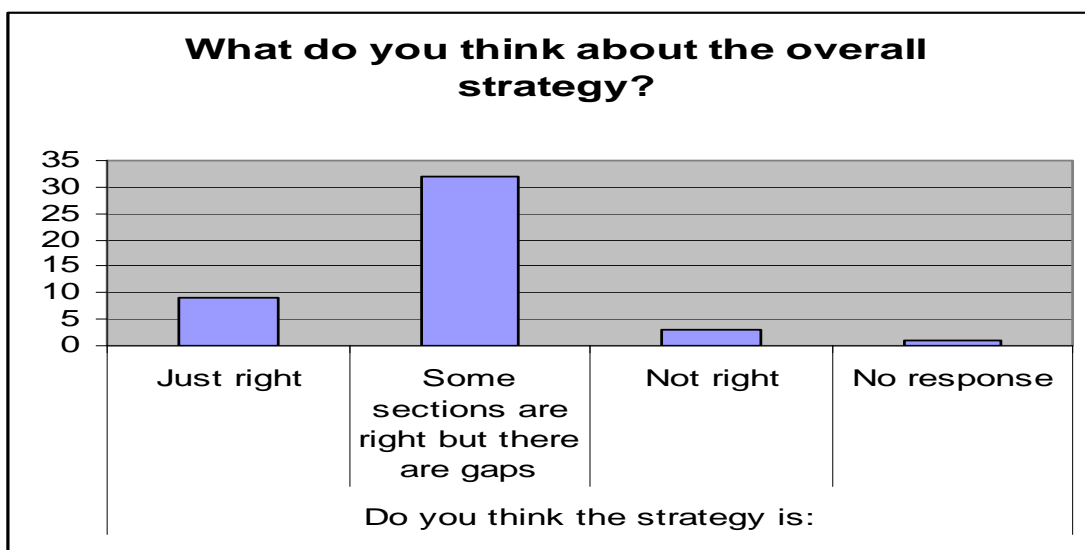
Here, there was overwhelming support for using the 12 pillars of independent living with 96% of respondents supportive of this.



There was strong support to establish a new group for disabled people in the city with 89% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing.



91% of respondents indicated their support for a new Board to oversee the work.



Only 20% of respondents felt the strategy was 'just right'. The majority response was 71% who stated that there were still some gaps. With regard to where the gaps were, the additional comments we received are described more below in section 2.

2.2 Context of the strategy - A variety of comments were made which suggested the context of AADS was not taken into account with enough prominence in earlier drafts. For this reason the section explaining the significance of the Social Model of Disability, The Equality Act 2010, the 12 Pillars of Independence and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People have all been given more prominence in the strategy and moved to an

earlier place in the document. At the same time as this, issues have been raised by consultation respondents which will be harder for this strategy to influence and this should be recognised. Examples of this would include changes in entitlement to benefits and the reduction in funding of statutory services over the last 5 years.

- 2.3 **Ownership of the AADS** - Consultation respondents strongly believe the strategy should be based on the social model of disability and the 12 Pillars of Independence. There were comments that the first draft does not yet fully reflect these approaches but it can be easily developed to enable this to happen. Development of the strategy so far has been recognised as an attempt to really move away from viewing disabled people as the responsibility of social care services but resulting in all disabled people becoming, and feeling that they are, active and valued citizens living independently in a city where they can thrive. There was a suggestion that it would be better not to use the 'Directorate for Children and Families' strap line on the title page and in the header throughout. This was because it could suggest that is the department is 'responsible' for disability issues in the city, and this would work against the inclusive and empowering spirit of the Strategy. There was a suggestion that the strategy is titled 'A Manchester All Age Disability Strategy' with small reference to Manchester City Council and no specific reference to Children and Families. There was a related suggestion not to name the Lead Member for Disability in the Strategy. This is so that responsibility for chairing the board on an ongoing basis lies with a particular role and not the specific present incumbent. Developing this idea further, there have been requests that an independent person take on the role of chairing development of the strategy. This to reinforce the message that it should not only be the responsibility of the council to deliver the strategy.
- 2.4 **Resourcing the AADS Work** - There was widespread concern that no financial resources have been identified to take the strategy forward and this was compared with the Age-Friendly Manchester initiative which has a team of staff to deliver it, so respondents agreed it will need a commitment from MCC and partner, both strategically and financially in order to make the difference the strategy aspires to. There was also more specific concern from Disabled People's Organisations (DPO's) in the city that many organisations are struggling to continue due to lack of funding and the city council is under extreme financial pressures to support them effectively. However, where MCC would like the participation of disabled people's organisations in the development of the AADS, there was hope that their input and experience should be valued through reimbursing all their participation costs.
- 2.5 **Children's Services** - The idea for having an 'all-age strategy' was broadly welcomed, with one respondent saying 'Having an all age strategy is sensible in that there will be continuity of services and experiences as people make their transitions through life stages.' However there were a few comments which suggested there was not enough emphasis in the first draft of the strategy on services and early intervention for children & young people and their families so that emphasis has been increased in the current document.

2.6 **Working Together For Change Methodology** Although there was recognition that the 'Working Together for Change model was useful for identifying disabled people's experiences, concern was also expressed about using "what good looks like for a disabled person" because

a) The themes discussed mainly focused around social services and health and wellbeing. This meant the model was also not able to incorporate the delivery of services and activities by **all** MCC departments, directorates and external partner organisations. Examples of this could include areas such as access to buildings, the environment and information, education and related play areas and play schemes, youth provision, adult and further education and higher education and community education in neighbourhoods, leisure, sports and arts, transport, planning, licensing, markets, information and wayfinding, parking and highways, regeneration and ward co-ordination.

b) Consultation responses were based on service users experience of **receiving** services, individual disabled people understandably didn't always appreciate **how** services and activities are **delivered**.

There was particular agreement from consultation respondents that the strategy needs to identify a commitment to mainstreaming inclusion for disabled people in all MCC and partner organisations policies, procedures, targets and strategies. It was particularly pointed out that although the 'This is Manchester' section mentions education it does not commit to inclusive education where appropriate for individuals, which is a key feature of independent living. To aid the process of ensuring the range of themes mentioned above are incorporated into the strategy and related minimum standards, it is recommended that the 12 Pillars of Independent Living are used as a basis for further development.

2.7 **Terminology** - A range and number of respondents were concerned about the use of terms used throughout the current draft of the strategy. They said that although they recognised that using the term "disability-friendly city" is similar to the now widely accepted and understood term "age-friendly city", they also said use of the phrase focuses on disability instead of removing barriers and developing an inclusive city. Further to this they explained that the term does not make sense in the context of the Social Model of Disability, as under this, disability means oppression and exclusion. They therefore suggest it would be better to say "**a disabled people friendly city**" which has now been incorporated into the strategy.

2.8 **'A Proper Manchester Welcome'** - was recognised as a term which could be appropriate to represent a very general Manchester culture or approach, however there was still a lot of concern that it could be thought of as patronising and does not adequately reflect disabled people's full involvement as active citizens. It was felt that it could imply that disabled people are marginalised and would be "welcomed" but not necessarily fully included. The feedback concluded that this term 'needs more thought' and should not be included. There were also a variety of concerns expressed that detailed drafting of the strategy should retain an emphasis on the social model of

disability, it was felt that this did not come across in the first draft. It was felt that the tone of the original document could be seen as patronising and needs to be written in a tone that helps change attitudes.

- 2.9 **Recognition of disability & barriers** - Recognition of hidden impairments and that many people, although they experience barriers, do not recognise themselves as being disabled, are both accepted as even being tricky issues within the disability world. For this reason, respondents say they feel it is important that appreciation of these points is included within development of the strategy. They also say the strategy should recognise that people often have multiple identities and that more work needs to be done to support disabled people in particular communities in Manchester. This would include BME communities, young disabled people, LGBT communities, disabled refugees and asylum seekers, and people with mental health issues, to name just a few.
- 2.10 **Carers** A range of views was expressed as to how much the AADS should also relate to support for carers. This is because although there was some recognition that carers can be subjected to some of the same barriers as disabled people, there was also a stronger voice, expressed by a wider range of people and organisations that not all disabled people are 'cared for' and that also relating to support for carers within this strategy could be loaded with negative connotations for a lot of disabled people. Despite the differences outlined above, there was also agreement that
- The AADS should recognise carers will have different experiences, sometimes different approaches and different points of view to disabled people.
 - Carers are, or should be, often defined in different ways. Wherever it is felt necessary to refer to carers within the strategy at all, they say it would be most helpful to clarify their roles. For example they could be referred to as partners, other family members, friends or neighbours who provide informal care, or paid carers or supporters.
 - The AADS should acknowledge some carers may also be disabled people.

For these reasons it was agreed within detailed drafting of the strategy that it should recognise the support carers offer to disabled people but further than that, just refer readers to the recently agreed MCC policy on supporting carers.

- 2.11 **Other Sources of Information and References** - Consultation respondents noted that earlier drafts of the strategy have used some information from research which did not use Social Model definitions. This can be a big issue for those organisations seeking to evidence the position of disabled people, so it is important the strategy acknowledges awareness of these conflicts.

The DPO's have provided great assistance in providing additional references to those used in previous drafting of the strategy and this will continue to be equally important in its further development. Notable additions to connections with other polices have included The United Nations Convention on the Rights

of Disabled People, the government's Independent Living Strategy and the council's Community of Interest Strategy report on Disabled People.

- 2.12 **Access All Areas** There was strong support for the previous draft of the strategy saying that meeting the access requirements of disabled people should be fundamental, with respondents to the consultation saying they believed urban design professionals including Manchester City Council planners can play a pivotal role in making this happen. There was also widespread agreement that if the access is designed to meet the requirements of disabled people, then it can meet the needs of anyone who encounters access barriers, including (for example) people pushing prams or pulling suitcases. Sadly we received a lot of comments that access around the city has not continued to improve with the pace and reliability that people feel has been the case in the past and they feel is necessary. There was also widespread disappointment that the legislation, national & local guidance and specialised standards relating to access are often poorly understood, only partially and inconsistently implemented and adhered to, then inadequately monitored. For example, one respondent said "it weakens good [access] standards and guidance if professionals are unsure of how to implement them.

There is a need to understand the intention behind the standards; otherwise the standards may not be used correctly. This has led to a situation where many new bars, restaurants have opened across the city with access that is not as good as it could or should be. Another respondent also said the number of officers employed by the city council who have a responsibility for advising on inclusive design is lower now than at any time in the last fifteen years. Manchester Disabled People's Access Group (MDPAG) suggest that this situation could be improved on if the various recognised national, local and specialist access standards are brought together to update Design For Access 2, the access design guide jointly written between MDPAG and MCC then subsequently adopted by MCC as the access standards they would use to assess accessibility of the built environment etc. in Manchester.

The Age-Friendly Manchester Design Group (AFDG) also pointed out in their submission to the recent AADS consultation that back in 2000 Manchester published its Access 2000 strategy. The intention of this strategy was to make Manchester 'the most accessible city in Europe', and it included a range of indicators to assess progress towards achieving that aim. A response to the consultation from the AFDG includes a recommendation that the AADS Board revisit the Access 2000 Strategy with the intention that Manchester can apply for the Access City Award, an EU funded competition that seeks to identify the most accessible city in Europe.

- 2.13 **Accessible Information** - A variety of organisations and individuals have said that information and advice should be a key theme of the AADS. They have said this should include access to advocacy support and incorporate issues such as improving access to all forms of information and communication, particularly anything that is produced electronically, based on websites or shared using social media.

Respondents have pointed out that the NHS Accessible Information Standard, which requires all NHS and adult social care organisations to meet the communication needs of all disabled people by 31st July 2016, **could** be referred to, to inform this work. However concern was also expressed that the broad nature of the AADS should be remembered if those NHS standards are to be referred to, so any initiatives coming out of the AADS to improve the accessibility of information, advice and other related activities do not only relate to health and social care.

- 2.14 **Awareness Training** - All organisations and a variety of individuals that commented on this were strongly in favour of the development of an awareness training programme which could sit alongside any more practical activities that may come out of the strategy. An individual respondent to the consultation said 'People making assumptions about me will be hard to change' and if this point is accepted Breakthrough's point that 'the focus on challenging and changing attitudes is essential for real change to occur' must be true. However, they are optimistic to use the potential significance of the strategy when they say 'we see this as an outstanding opportunity for a culture shift to organisations working **with** disabled people and our organisations - and not **for** us.'

2.15 **Appendix 2: the standards we aspire to for a disability-friendly city**

The standards set out in Appendix 2 of the last draft of the strategy received a mixed response in recent consultation responses. Some respondents made comments like

- The details and specifics of the standards are not clear in the document. It is also not clear how these will be implemented / enforced and who will safeguard these and challenge individuals or organisations on behalf of disabled people.
- The current draft standards are only based on comments and are not comprehensive.
- The purpose and strength of the Standards needs further clarification and definition.

However, Breakthrough said 'the standards and targets/outcomes in the appendix may need more shaping by disabled people and our organisations, but are an excellent starting point'. Further to this, Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People say the 'Life Chances' report, a report produced by the government in 2005 to set out their vision for improving the life chances of disabled people may be a useful source of potential standards.

3 **Next Steps**

- 3.1 **The Partnership Board** - the membership of the board will include the relevant elected member (who will initially act as Chairperson), senior directors and managers from the Council, the NHS, GMP, the Housing Sector, the Chamber of Commerce, Transport for Greater Manchester, Leisure & Culture, representatives from a Manchester-based disabled persons organisation

(DPO) via the Engagement Group, and Disability Champions as leads from each thematic subgroup.

It is vital that the board is made up of a wide variety of organisations that can drive through the change that's required. This board and the engagement group will have overall strategic oversight for the All Age Disability Strategy, and will drive the strategy forward. It will also ensure that other Council directorates and functions – such as Neighbourhoods and Planning – are fully engaged with the strategy, and that the emerging learning and best practice becomes embedded in their respective strategic approaches, their work and how they engage with citizens.

- 3.2 **Launch the Strategy** – The strategy will be formally launched in August, the aim is to work with the Disabled People's Organisations in planning this and it is hoped that this will be high profile and attract the required interest in the strategy and its work. One of the key failings of the design of the strategy is the lack of suitable photographic images. It is proposed to address that through a Photographic competition to begin to help build up a catalogue of positive photographs of disabled people, officers are exploring the possibility of running this in conjunction with one of the local galleries or an independent gallery in the city.
- 3.3 **ADSS Engagement group** - The most important group will be the AADS Engagement group, this group will work in partnership with the Board and will ensure that the voice and views of Disabled Children, Adults and their supporters is at the heart of the work. The Engagement Group will have members on each of the workstreams and will play an integral part in the boards work programme. It is proposed that the core group of Disabled People's Organisations who have been working with Officers on the strategy development will lead this group. To fully embed the Social Model of Disability into the ethos of this approach the Engagement Group will develop membership of the Partnership Board and each workstream will be required to take part in Social Model of Disability Awareness training, this will ensure that the principles of the Social Model are at the heart of the work.
- 3.4 **AADS Thematic subgroups** - The Thematic subgroups are the vehicles by which partners and disabled citizens will work the actions into plans and then work with partners to deliver or implement the plans.

It is envisaged that the Partnership Board, in conjunction with the Engagement group will consider which thematic areas will be prioritised first. This will be based on the feedback that has already been received from the consultation which shows the ten headings below were areas that people felt should be prioritised.



4. Summary

- 4.1 This work has taken over two years to come to fruition which has been necessary to evidence true engagement and participation with as many disabled citizens and organisations as possible. This consultation was not concerned with achieving quantitative data e.g. high numbers of responses to particular questions, but essentially about consultation on the language, tone and perceptions of the Strategy as seen through the eyes of Disabled people. Work can now begin to set in place a new governance model and deliver this ambition for Manchester.
- 4.2 Members are requested to note the critical stage of the development of the Strategy and support the next steps to begin the engagement work and establish the Board.