

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2016

Present:

Councillor Rawlins - In the Chair
Councillors Ahmed Ali, Cookson, Cooley, Evans, Fletcher- Hackwood, Grimshaw, Hassan, Madeleine Monaghan, Sharif Mahamed and Knowles

Councillor N Murphy, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods
Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Culture and Leisure
Inspector Laura Marler, Greater Manchester Police
Priya Chopra, Saheli
Farheen Anwar, Independent Choices
Catherine Cutt, Manchester Women's Aid
Clare Ronalds, GP Clinical Lead for IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety)

CESC/16/12 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2016 as a correct record.

CESC/16/13 Manchester Central Library and Archives+ - two years on

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which set out the progress made by Manchester Central Library and Archives+ since reopening in March 2014. The report highlighted the success of attracting new audiences, the Business Library, and the Library Live Cultural Programme. It also outlined how Manchester Central Library underpins the overarching library offer across the city. Members watched a short video providing context to the report, following which the Citywide Services Manager introduced the report across its main themes.

Members welcomed the report and asked for further detail on some of the content, including the outcomes of the school visits and the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) history month. The Citywide Services Manager described the activities, explaining that Shakespeare resources were used to promote literacy and LGBT history used as a basis for tackling homophobia in schools. A member queried how the needs of older children and young people were catered for. The Citywide Services Manager explained a survey had been carried out by young people and described activities such as the summer reading challenge and archive plus young volunteers. A member queried whether volunteers were reimbursed expenses (such as travel costs), to which the Citywide Services Manager responded they were not. Members asked for this to be considered within a future report on the Committee's work programme on volunteering.

A member queried why Central Library was not working with homelessness action groups, in particular the arts and heritage group or signing up to the Homelessness

Charter. She noted the press coverage last year where homeless people were camped outside Central Library. The Citywide Services Manager advised that the library was working closely with local homelessness charities around promoting library membership, and he would explore the suggestion.

In response to member's queries regarding how age friendly the library was the Citywide Services Manager explained that volunteer 'meet and greeters' helped people navigate their way around the library and its resources, and digital champion volunteers assisted in the media lounge which also held 'digital drop ins' for anyone requiring assistance with technology. The Citywide Services Manager advised a large proportion of users of the family history service were aged over 55. A member who was also the Lead Member for Older People requested that the library consider celebrating Older People's day on 1 October 2016, to which members agreed.

Members discussed where people who used the libraries came from, what facilities were available at community libraries and which were available on the internet. A member who was previously a member of Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee (which scrutinised Libraries previously) commented that the ward demographics of library users had not changed much over the past two years. Members sought assurance that archive services were as widely available in libraries as possible. The Citywide Services Manager clarified that the family history online resources were available city wide; and the extension of the family history helpdesk to community libraries was under consideration. He added that some archives could be accessed via the internet from home or elsewhere including the archives images collection and online resources; but some services, such as family history were not.

The Chair noted that transport had been provided at one library event; and enquired whether discounted public transport tickets could be considered instead. The Citywide Services Manager responded that this event was the first time transport had been provided but that he would look into this. He added that he had negotiated with Transport for Greater Manchester (TFGM) discounted travel for school children in the past.

The Chair queried the rationale for using the Supernova software for those who were visually impaired. The Citywide Services Manager advised that this product was the market leader when it was introduced; but that this would be reviewed at an appropriate time. The Chair questioned whether the library was overly reliant on heritage lottery funding and queried which other funding streams or strategies were used. The Citywide Services Manager advised that a number of funding sources which had different funding criteria were used including the Wolfson Foundation and the Garfield Weston Foundation amongst others.

Decisions

1. To thank officers for the report
2. To include expenses for volunteers within the scope of a future report on the Committee's work programme on volunteering
3. To request that officers investigate the possibility of getting involved in the work of the homelessness action groups and signing up to the homelessness charter

4. To request more detail on ward specific activities and resources in a future update
5. To request that officers consider how best to help libraries celebrate Older People's day on 1 October 2016

CESC/16/14 Community Safety Overview

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which was requested by the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee in order to provide an overview of the work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The report provided updates across the spectrum of CSP priorities which included Tackling Anti Social Behaviour, Tackling Alcohol and Drug Related Crime, Changing Offender Behaviour, Protecting Vulnerable People, Tackling Serious and Organised Crime, Tackling the Crimes of Most Impact, Tackling Hidden Crime, and Making the City Centre Safer. The Community Safety Lead introduced the report across its main themes. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods thanked the hate crime third party reporting centres which undertook this service on a voluntary basis; and advised that an update on the current position regarding hate crime in the city would be circulated to all members.

A member sought clarification on the closure powers referred to within the report. The Community Safety Lead confirmed they could be used on a range of premises and described how the powers were used; explaining that they replaced the previous crack house closure orders. A member requested further information on serious and organised crime, and asked whether this was increasing or decreasing. Inspector Laura Marler described what Greater Manchester Police were doing in respect of this, including joint initiatives such as work with Action for Children to help young people involved in gangs or at risk of becoming involved in gangs. Members agreed to request that statistics on serious and organised crime be circulated to members. The Chair added that it would be helpful to circulate to new members of the Committee any previous crime statistics received by the Committee over the preceding twelve months.

A member praised the work of the Council's Prevent Team and requested information be included in a future update regarding the engagement work they had carried out or planned to carry out with different communities; to which the Community Safety Lead agreed. Members requested that they also be consulted and involved in this.

A member welcomed that anti social behaviour incidents within the city had reduced but was concerned about the rise of incidents involving fireworks and asked how this could be addressed. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods explained the Council's policy in respect of fireworks advising that there were restrictions on the dates between which fireworks were available for sale, and that Neighbourhood Management Teams would respond to any issues of concern.

A member praised the work officers had undertaken in respect of hate crime and in particular the vigil held on Sunday 17 July for the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT). The Chair agreed and offered

to write to the Dean of Manchester on behalf of the Committee to thank them for their work in respect of hate crime.

A member noted that 22 July was International Remembrance Day for people who had died prematurely from drugs and alcohol and asked whether the Council were planning anything in respect of this. The Executive Member advised that he would refer this suggestion to the Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing for consideration.

The Chair said that in a future update she would like more information on the night-time economy across the city. A member asked for information on where drug and alcohol services within the city were based; and officers agreed to circulate this to members.

The Chair noted it was important to retain the resilience of the city in light of possible future funding cuts to Greater Manchester Police. Inspector Laura Marler described the re-structuring which had taken place within GMP to respond to this and ensure they were efficient. The Community Safety Lead added that this was where the introduction of integrated neighbourhood management teams would help as they would reduce duplication and increase the sharing of information.

Decisions:

1. To request that the Chair write on behalf of the Committee to the Dean of Manchester to thank them for their work on hate crime
2. To request that statistics on serious and organised crime within Manchester be provided to members
3. To request that statistics on crime within the city provided to members over the preceding twelve months be provided to new members of the Committee for their information
4. To request that members are consulted and involved in any planned future engagement exercises carried out by the Prevent team

CESC/16/15 Domestic Abuse and Violence and Delivering Differently

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) on Domestic Violence and Abuse which was requested to provide an update on the Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy 2016-2020. The Committee had also requested further information on Delivering Differently which had been reported on to the Committee previously; and the outcomes of which had fed into the Strategy. The Committee welcomed Priya Chopra, Farheen Anwar, Catherine Cutt, Clare Ronalds and the Council's Domestic Abuse Reduction Coordinator. The Community Safety Lead introduced the report across its main themes. The Chair invited the guests to introduce themselves and explain their respective roles in respect of Domestic Abuse.

The Domestic Abuse Reduction Coordinator explained her role was to work closely across the Council and with partner agencies to reduce domestic abuse. She explained that she would help deliver the strategy and would work closely with Councillor Sarah Judge, Chair of the Domestic Abuse Forum.

Priya Chopra introduced herself explaining she worked for Saheli Asian Women's Project which provided advice, information and support services to Asian women and their children fleeing domestic abuse and/or forced marriages. She described the types of support they offered.

Clare Ronalds explained that she was the GP clinical lead for the IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) Project in Manchester. She advised its focus was to deliver training for GPs and was a collaboration between the Council, NHS and the voluntary and community sector. The project started in 2012, its aim to train all General Practitioners (GPs) in Manchester. The training involved raising awareness amongst GPs of the health impacts of Domestic Abuse, which were many, for example, 160 codes on a GP's computer could relate to domestic abuse. She added that GP's were also trained in communication skills including how to ask the right questions of patients. She advised the project was co-delivered by Manchester Women's Aid and had already had many positive outcomes, for example reporting rates amongst older people had improved. She said that it was intended that by March 2018 all GP's within Manchester will receive the training. Clare Ronalds noted that for many victims it took up to 35 incidents before they called the police. She explained how the IRIS project was targeted at all communities explaining how they referred patients to appropriate services.

Catherine Cutt explained she was the Health Lead for Manchester Women's Aid, which was the largest Domestic Violence and Abuse provider across the city and had been providing services for over 40 years. They operated five refuges providing safe accommodation for victims, provided an outreach service, playworkers and group work alongside being involved in specialist projects such as the aforementioned IRIS project and an initiative for midwives.

Farheen Anwar advised she was the Community Language Helpline Coordinator for Independent Choices, which provided confidential support to victims of domestic violence and abuse that was sensitive to religious and cultural needs. She advised that Punjabi and Urdu speakers were available to provide advice and guidance including safety planning and referrals. She added that Independent Choices were also administrators for the 'End the Fear' website and worked closely with Greater Manchester Police.

A member asked how professionals would respond to the gap created by the closure of Broken Rainbow, a charity providing specialist support to victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse from the LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender) communities. The Domestic Abuse Reduction Coordinator responded that, upon learning of the closure, the Council had contacted the clients of Broken Rainbow and referred them to the Council's in-house services for support. She added that talks were currently underway with the Interim Mayor and Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester to see how best to address this and explore whether any funding could be secured. She reported that Galop operated a national helpline for LGBT victims of domestic abuse. She added that the police had introduced a new crime closure code to encourage the LGBT community to report incidences of domestic abuse and a GAYDIO radio campaign had commenced to encourage reporting.

A member raised the issue of lack of appropriate accommodation for the LGBT community, in particular older people who may not be comfortable being open about their sexuality. Members agreed that securing appropriate accommodation for different groups was often an issue and agreed on the importance of prevention work before people reached a point of crisis. Clare Ronalds advised learnings from the domestic homicide review highlighted issues faced by the elderly and they tried to feed back this learning as part of the IRIS training. Catherine Cutt described how IRIS helped identify older victims of Domestic Abuse and how referrals could be made for social activities which helped build independence and confidence; and respite for carers. Members discussed financial abuse and how this could be addressed. The Domestic Abuse Reduction Co-ordinator stressed the importance to victims of financial independence; explaining that support workers could help people access employment or benefits.

Members queried why an increased number of incidences of domestic abuse was a good thing and whether there were particular 'hotspot' areas or times when more incidences occurred. Inspector Laura Marler assured members that Greater Manchester Police had a lot of knowledge and experience in respect of Domestic Abuse and that she could provide statistics on this if required. She added that where grounds existed for prosecution this would be pursued. The Community Safety Lead explained that improved reporting rates were valued as this demonstrated that promoting awareness was successful. She explained that the changes to the current advertising campaign arose from feedback gained during the Delivering Differently exercise. A member said that she did not think it was helpful to highlight hotspots; arguing that Domestic Abuse was a universal issue and this would undermine the work done to raise awareness and encourage reporting. Members welcomed the new advertising campaign and offered to help with this requesting the publicity materials and information on support services be provided to all members.

Members questioned why only 5% of the budget for Domestic Abuse was spent on prevention, arguing this should be higher. Members requested that a further update be received in twelve months time and illustrate how the levels of investment had changed.

Members commented that whilst the report provided an update on the Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy 2016-2020 they were disappointed it did not include much information on the outcomes of delivering differently and the pilot around children that witnessed domestic abuse. Officers advised that the outcomes for delivering differently had informed the strategy. The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator explained that children witnessing domestic abuse was a safeguarding issue and described the work with the Early Help Hubs. Clare Ronalds added that the IRIS project targeted all age ranges. The Community Safety Lead described a number of projects which focussed on early intervention therapeutic initiatives, and the work with schools to promote awareness adding that this 'whole family approach' was in the early stages at present. The Chair agreed that further work was required adding that this could be reported in a future update either to this Committee or Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Members discussed domestic abuse during pregnancy and questioned why this was the case. Catherine Cutt explained the reasons varied but were thought to include

jealousy and loss of control. She added that she was keen to empower staff to ask the right questions to encourage disclosure and that midwives were required to ask about domestic abuse as part of their processes.

Decisions:

1. To thank the guests for attending the meeting and sharing their experiences with the Committee
2. To request a further update in approximately 12 months time, to include the cost benefits, how levels of investment had changed, and an analysis of whether the service pledges within the strategy have been met
3. To request that officers provide copies of publicity materials to all members to enable them to help promote awareness of domestic abuse
4. To request that officers provide details of the support organisations available to all members
5. To note that a further update is required in respect of the impact of domestic abuse on children and to request that the Chair discuss with the Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee which Committee considers the update

CESC/16/16 Overview Report

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programmed.

Decision:

To note the overview report and to agree the work programme.