

## **Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2016**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Rawlins - In the Chair

Councillors Alijah, Cookson, Cooley, Fletcher- Hackwood, Grimshaw, Madeleine Monaghan, Pritchard, Sharif Mahamed and Knowles

Councillor S Murphy, Deputy Leader

Councillor Priest, Deputy Leader

Councillor N Murphy, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Culture and Leisure

Elaine Unegbo, Age Friendly Manchester Older People's Board

**Apologies:** Councillors Ahmed Ali, Evans and Hassan

#### **CESC/16/17            Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2016 as a correct record.

#### **CESC/16/18            Our Manchester**

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which provided an update on the development of Our Manchester including an update on Libraries following on from the previous committee meeting. Information was also included on the Parks Strategy, the consultation for which was undertaken using an Our Manchester approach. The Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) and the Deputy Leader introduced the report across its main themes.

A member, who was also the Lead Member for Valuing Older People, asked how the Our Manchester approach would be communicated and promoted to residents. She noted that Age Friendly Manchester was a good example of how the approach worked in practice; adding that this had taken time to evolve. The Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) agreed responding that there was support for the approach which had been developed in co-production with residents. She described the Wythenshawe Games; a successful community driven event which illustrated how the approach worked in practice.

The Deputy Leader added that Our Manchester was a ten year strategy and that lots of consultation had been undertaken regarding behaviours; on which she could provide a future update to the Committee. She said that the delivery plan for the strategy was currently being developed, and this would need to be flexible to respond to changes in circumstances. The Deputy Leader explained that a programme of Our Manchester training would be delivered starting with sessions for members in November 2016. The training would consider the thinking behind the approach and

would feed into the delivery plan for the strategy. She added that the Council's Budget Consultation had started earlier than ever this year and illustrated how the Council was trying to engage with residents, over 1200 responses had been received.

The Chair welcomed the report but challenged the level of detail it contained and asked for more data to be provided in a future update; for example how many workshops had been carried out and where, and statistics for the distribution of hard copies of consultation documents. A member asked how the Council engaged with those who were less involved within their communities. The Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) explained that the Council was thinking about how best to engage with residents. She described a recent consultation in Benchill which had involved knocking on doors and talking to people in parks and supermarkets in a non-prescriptive way. The Chair asked what assurances could be given that the Council had collected the right information and how people would receive feedback regarding the information they had given. The Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) explained that the approach was in its initial stages and that further analysis was now required; she described some key developments including the 'Listening in Action' events with staff and how feedback had been given.

A member praised the library facilities at Platt Lane but also questioned how the Council could ensure its sustainability in the longer term; and what the Council was doing to support infrastructure for volunteers. The Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) advised that the Council was currently co-designing a new grants application process with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and had carried out a number of workshops over the summer in order to inform this. The Strategic Lead (Libraries, Galleries and Culture) added that some library volunteers had now gained paid employment which was a positive development.

In response to a members query regarding business engagement with the Our Manchester strategy the Deputy Leader advised that business representatives had been invited to participate in workshops and review the resources needed. The Deputy Chief Executive described some of the work being done by the private sector in Wythenshawe where a law firm was encouraging its employees to carry out socially responsible work in a more productive way by acting as mentors for young people.

The Chair welcomed the report. She requested that when the Committee next consider this item officers provide case studies and guests be invited to share their experiences.

### **Decisions:**

1. To welcome the Our Manchester approach
2. To request a future update at an appropriate time. To request that this includes more statistical data, case studies and information regarding the consultation on behaviours.
3. To invite guests when this item is next considered

## **CESC/16/19                      Equality Action Plans 2016/17: Update**

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People, Policy and Reform) which provided an update on the delivery of the Directorate Equality Action Plans 2016/17 and agreed Equality Impact Assessments. It also provided an initial overview of the developing approach to equality planning within the budget and business planning process for 2017/18 – 2019/20. The Strategic Workforce Planning Lead introduced the report across its main themes. He explained that following the Council's budget setting process last year, a Corporate Equality Champions group was established to co-ordinate, embed and champion equality issues across their departments. The Committee welcomed a number of Champions to the meeting including the Head of Youth Strategy, Interim Head of Legal Services, the Strategic Commissioning Lead, the Interim Head of Service (South Locality, Children's Services) and the Strategic Lead Adult Social Care (Locality & Citywide Services). The Strategic Workforce Planning Lead explained that this report provided a further update following the last report to Committee in January 2016

In respect of the Corporate Core Directorate, the Chair requested more information on the work the Council was doing to support residents to access benefits. The Head of Legal Services responded that a full action plan would be produced, which she would provide to members of the Committee. A member noted that the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) had carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) in respect of the consequences of the introduction of the benefits cap and queried whether the Council was challenging this. The Deputy Leader agreed on the importance of knowing what other parties were doing which impacted on Manchester residents in order to mitigate against the consequences.

A member noted that many residents still used landline telephones as their main form of communication and queried how the Council could be satisfied it was consulting adequately following the cessation of the telephone survey. The Strategic Lead assured members that telephones would still be used to consult with residents; but that this would be part of a blended approach using a range of communication methods.

In respect of a members query regarding increased costs of the Nationality Checking Service officers advised that this reflected the costs of providing the service. The Head of Legal Services advised that there had been a decrease in applications nationally as Central Government had increased its charges; but Council had not increased its charges in line with this increase.

In respect of the Growth and Neighbourhoods Directorate members raised concerns regarding changes to the waste and recycling services the Council offered and how the Council was engaging with residents to mitigate the impact of these. The Deputy Leader advised that provision had been made for people with special circumstances, for example those with disabilities. Members agreed that this should be better advertised. The Deputy Leader advised that she would consult with the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods to provide an update to the Committee.

In respect of the Children and Families Directorate the Chair noted that following reductions to the 'Free Travel to School' scheme some residents had contacted her

regarding problems they had experienced buying the wrong travel passes. She added that clearer information was needed and suggested the Council carry out further work with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM). The Head of Youth Strategy advised this policy would be reviewed in the Autumn and she would feed members comments back. A member queried whether the Supported Accommodation Improvement Board would include residents living in supported accommodation. The Strategic Commissioning Lead assured members that partnership working was a key priority for the directorate advising he would investigate and respond directly to the member regarding this. A member queried the work that was being done to encourage more people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities to adopt children. Officers advised a targeted approach was being taken and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee received regular updates on this.

### **Decisions:**

1. To thank officers and the Equality Champions for attending the meeting
2. To request that the Head of Legal Services provide the action plan for providing support to residents to access revenues and benefits to members of the Committee.
3. To request that the Deputy Leader consult with the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods to establish how vulnerable residents affected by the changes to the Council's waste and recycling service were consulted with, and provide an update to the Committee
4. To note the report and request a future update at an appropriate time

### **CESC/16/20            Improving Life Chances: Generations Together**

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People, Policy and Reform) which outlined a range of activity underway as part of the Manchester Generations Together programme. This programme brings together the Intergenerational work being undertaken as part of the Age-friendly Manchester (AFM) programme and through work to support the Council's Corporate Equality Objectives. The programme of activities builds on previous work undertaken including work to deliver 12 Intergenerational projects across the City supported by government funding between 2009 and 2011, and activity focussed on embedding Intergenerational working into service delivery between 2012 and 2014. A central theme of this work has been collaboration with partners across the City to deliver cross-cutting improvements. The Committee welcomed Elaine Unegbu from the Age Friendly Manchester Older People's Board. The Project Manager introduced the report. The Lead Member for Older People stressed the importance of embedding the age friendly approach within the mindset of people and its links with the 'Our Manchester' strategy. She thanked Elaine Unegbu and the other Age Friendly Volunteers for their work.

A member praised the intention to embed the age friendly approach into the various equality strands; and asked for further clarity on this. The Equalities Team Leader responded that they had consulted with people of all ages across the equality strands and involved them in the design and planning of these events, for example the Council's Pride submission included young people. A member queried who would be

involved in the next steps of the Voice and Influence Strategy. The Project Manager responded that this included established structures such as the Youth Council and those from the Voluntary and Community Sector amongst others that could add value to the strategy.

The Chair asked whether younger people had been encouraged to work with older people through established schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh programme. The Project Manager welcomed the idea and described previous projects to promote intergenerational work in schools. A member who worked with young people suggested that engagement with young people extend beyond formal educational settings also.

Members noted references to Intergenerational Workshops and whether this would be extended to other parts of the city, in particular student areas. The Deputy Leader described work carried out in a densely student populated area to promote relations between the different ages. Elaine Unegbo described her perception that many students felt they were part of the University but not the wider community and the importance of challenging this. The Project Manager described initiatives such as the 'Sharing the City' project where students worked with both young and older people to drive improvements to their built environment, for example making buildings age friendly and community gardens.

A member asked whether there was opportunity within the selective licensing campaign for young and older people to work together with a common aim. The Deputy Leader welcomed the suggestion, agreeing that people of all ages had a common interest in their communities. She added that she would report this back to colleagues

Elaine Unegbo reported that a key aim of the programme she felt was to see increased collaboration; and for both young and old people to realise the benefits of working together. The Chair advised that she was attending the next meeting of Age Friendly Manchester and would update members on this.

#### **Decisions:**

1. To welcome the report
2. To request a future update in approximately 12 months time

#### **CESC/16/21      Neighbourhood Investment Fund/ Ward Plans**

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which was requested by the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee to provide an update on the Neighbourhood Investment Fund and ward plans. A report was also submitted to the meeting of Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 5 September 2016 which contained some information on the Neighbourhood Investment Fund in addition to ward co-ordination. The Strategic Lead (Neighbourhoods) introduced the report across its main themes. He noted that the table provided within the report illustrated how last years grants met the Council's 'Our Manchester' objectives. The Strategic Lead (Neighbourhoods) introduced the report across its main themes.

A member raised a concern that the same groups and initiatives may always get funded and asked how officers and members could encourage new groups and initiatives within their wards. The Deputy Leader agreed on the importance of this. The Chair suggested members work with officers via ward co-ordination to achieve this aim.

The Chair questioned the support provided to community groups to apply to the Neighbourhood Investment Fund in libraries and sought assurance that officers were doing this in practice. The Strategic Lead (Neighbourhoods) advised that officers were aware. In response to a further query he responded that staff working in neighbourhood offices could still provide support to community groups. Members suggested that training be delivered to community groups who could then cascade the learning to other groups. The Strategic Lead welcomed the suggestion whilst noting that there were limited resources for each ward. He suggested members raise this via ward co-ordination. The Chair added it would be good if there was greater capacity for the Voluntary and Community Sector to support itself.

**Decision:**

To welcome the report

**CESC/16/21            Annual Galleries Report**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Manchester City Galleries and Director of Neighbourhoods which detailed Manchester City Galleries' performance during 2015/16, outlined how they planned to deliver their vision in 2016/17, and presented a revenue budget for 2016/17 that was approved by Art Galleries Committee on 17 February 2016. The Chair noted that this was the Committee's first report on galleries. The Committee welcomed the Director of Manchester City Galleries, the Assistant Director, and the Strategic Lead (Libraries, Galleries and Culture). The Director of Manchester City Galleries gave members a flavour of the work that the Manchester Galleries carried out.

The Chair congratulated the Director on bringing the work of the galleries to life. She advised that she had not visited galleries for some time due to a previous bad experience; but she would definitely be visiting now. A member welcomed the vogue exhibitions that had been carried out over the summer. Members supported the reference to increased numbers of visitors (footfall) but queried how this compared with other cities. Members also asked for more information on the work the galleries were doing with schools. The Director advised that the footfall at Manchester Galleries was approximately 30% higher than other Core Cities (comparable cities within the UK). She described how she had increased visitor numbers; but explained they were now relatively stable. She described the work galleries had undertaken with young people whereby they tried to match the interest of artists with those of young people.

Members queried whether galleries employed people on zero-hours contracts, to which the Director responded they did not. She advised that some artists chose to work on a free-lance basis; and as such were employed in this manner.

A member expressed disappointment with the removal of the clothing collections from Platt Hall, within Platt Fields Park. The Director explained the particular issues with the storage of materials within that building and how the galleries wanted to increase the accessibility of the collection. She assured the member that there were no plans to change the use of the building from one that housed gallery collections at the present time and requested suggestions as to its best future use.

A member asked what could be done to bring the work of galleries into local communities. The Director described a number of initiatives that sought to do this including taking exhibitions to care homes. She also described a joint initiative with HOME to show Bollywood films and advised that the possibility of popup screens used to screen cinema in parts of Asia was being explored.

Members agreed on the importance of galleries being free at point of access and the Chair sought assurance that this would continue. The Executive Member for Culture and Leisure confirmed that the intention was to ensure they remained free to access. The Chair queried how confident the Director was that future projections would be met. The Director responded that she was fully confident that future budget projections would be met, if not exceeded. She replied that Council funding was only part of the picture. She added that Manchester Galleries was considered a national leader in the gallery world and she was confident the Arts Council for England funding and similarly that from charitable organisations would continue over the next few years.

**Decisions:**

1. To note the report
2. To request a future update at an appropriate time

**CESC/16/22          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 programme.

A member who was also the Lead Member for Gay Men gave apologies for the Committee's November meeting where a report on Transgender issues would be considered and requested that an invite be extended to the Lead Member for Lesbians. A member requested that the report on Community Cohesion (Moston Pilot) be scheduled for consideration.

**Decision:**

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