

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2017

Present:

Councillor Rawlins - In the Chair

Councillors Ahmed Ali, Cookson, Cooley, Evans, Fletcher- Hackwood, Grimshaw, Hassan, Knowles, Madeleine Monaghan and Sharif Mahamed

Councillor S Murphy, Deputy Leader

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Culture and Leisure

Paul Hannam, Friends of Alexandra Park

Angela Downing, Friends of Alexandra Park

Mike Wild, Macc

Martin Preston, Macc

Lynne Stafford, The Gaddum Centre

Claire Evans, 4CT

Oneida Bramble, Sports Coach and volunteer

Bren Fawcett, Age-Friendly Manchester Older People's Board

Dave Williams, Age-Friendly Manchester Older People's Board

CESC/17/01 Minutes

A member commented that she was referred to in the minutes as the Lead Member for Valuing Older People and that this should read the Lead Member for Age-Friendly Manchester.

Decision:

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2016 as a correct record, subject the above amendment.

CESC/17/02 Manchester Parks Strategy 2017 – 2026

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth & Neighbourhoods), the Director of Neighbourhoods and the Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) which provided a summary of the new ten year Manchester Parks Strategy and, following extensive consultation, set out the vision and actions to make it happen. It also gave the context for the Strategy's development since the update to the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee on 23 February 2016. The Committee was invited to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Executive on 11 January 2017. The Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) introduced the report across its main themes. The Committee welcomed Paul Hannam and Angela Downing from the Friends of Alexandra Park group.

Mr Hannam informed the Committee that he was the Chair of the Friends of Alexandra Park and that he and a core group of other volunteers had been involved with the group for many years, including through the renovation process. He reported that he was very pleased with the improvements to the park and that use of

the park had grown considerably. He advised that his group was in regular contact with the Council's Parks Service.

Ms Downing informed members that she was the Secretary of the Friends of Alexandra Park and also of the Alexandra Park Heritage Group. She reported that a requirement of the lottery funding received for the park was to preserve the heritage of the park. She reported that the Group had been working to create an archive and that a book and video had been commissioned. She advised that, while the park was now very well used by many people for a diverse range of activities, it was still important to continue to tackle barriers which prevented some people from using the park and to tackle fear of visiting the park.

In response to a member's question on safety in parks, the Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) outlined the actions taken to make parks safer including removing some shrubbery to improve sightlines, security presence in the evenings and working alongside Greater Manchester Police (GMP), for example, to warn students about walking through parks as a shortcut late at night. He advised that the Strategy aimed to make parks vibrant, well-used spaces and that this in itself made people feel safer.

A member expressed concern at the low number of trees in the city centre and also that the Strategy did not include plans for new green spaces to be developed. The Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) advised members that, in addition to the Parks Strategy, there was a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy which included a Tree Action Plan. He advised that the need for new or improved green spaces was considered as part of plans for new housing developments. The Chair reported that the Manchester Tree Action Plan had been considered at the most recent meeting of the Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee and requested that the report be circulated to Committee members for information.

The Committee discussed barriers to people accessing parks and how people could be encouraged to access parks. The Chair advised that more seating was needed in some parks and that it would also be useful to provide information to the public on more accessible, flatter routes around parks. The Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) informed members that the feedback from the consultation had indicated that, while a lot of good work was taking place in parks, there was a need for better communication of this to the public and that the Strategy focused on improving communication. He advised that park benches were currently being upgraded and that an audit of park benches would be undertaken as some parks did have fewer benches. He reported that clear standards would be introduced on bench provision and wider accessibility issues. He also advised that work would be undertaken to develop information on accessible walking routes around parks.

In response to a member's question, the Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) reported that the service worked in partnership with "Friends of" groups and other partners and that, where appropriate, opportunities such as community orchards could be incorporated into the Park Plan for individual parks. In response to a question from the Chair, he advised that income generated, for example, from car parking, was re-invested in parks.

The Executive Member for Culture and Leisure advised that the Strategy consultation and the recent Budget conversation had indicated that parks were among the most valued and well-used places in the city. He outlined the investment in parks and the work with partners. He advised that further work was needed to improve communication and that all information on parks should be available from a central information point.

The Chair thanked the guests from the Friends of Alexandra Park and the other members of their group for all their work to help improve the park. She recommended that the Committee receive an update report on the Parks Strategy in approximately six to nine months' time. Members agreed to endorse the recommendations to Executive set out in the report.

Decisions:

1. To request that the report on the Manchester Tree Action Plan submitted to the Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 3 January 2017 by circulated to Committee members for information.
2. To receive an update report in approximately six to nine months' time.
3. To endorse the recommendations within the report that:

The Executive is recommended to:

1. To consider and note the findings from the Consultation on the Manchester Parks Strategy, noting the significance of parks in delivering other strategic priorities across the City and the weight of support from residents and stakeholders about the importance of parks.
2. To consider and approve the adoption of the proposed vision, strategic priorities and actions to deliver the Strategy over the next 10 years.
3. Delegate authority to the Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) in consultation with the Executive Member for Culture and Leisure to complete the production of the Strategy document for communication with residents, visitors, partners and businesses.

CESC/17/03 Volunteering in the city – Part One – Overview of Volunteering activity in the City

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which provided an overview of how volunteering was facilitated and promoted throughout the city, and how residents and those who lived outside the city, businesses and their employees, and the voluntary, community and public sectors, engaged in a diverse range of volunteering experiences. The report also outlined from working in an "Our Manchester" way, a number of key opportunities and considerations to enable more people to be engaged in their city. The Strategic Lead for Neighbourhoods (South) introduced the report across its main themes. The Committee welcomed Martin Preston from Macc and Oneida Bramble, a sports coach and volunteer.

The Deputy Leader emphasised the valuable role of Manchester's thousands of volunteers without whom, she advised, the city would not function.

In response to a question from the Chair, Mr Preston outlined the role of the Volunteer Centre Manchester (VCM), which provided a way for residents to access volunteering opportunities and advised organisations on how to better utilise and support its volunteers. He advised that there were different types of volunteering, including informal volunteering, such as helping a neighbour, which would not be accessed through VCM. He reported, however, that VCM linked together work on volunteering and, as an example, advised that they were currently working with the Council's Human Resources service on enabling Council employees to access volunteering. In response to a member's question, he reported that it was proposed that Council employees would be able to undertake two days of volunteering for a non-profit organisation each year while still being paid for their Council job.

The Service Development Specialist (Libraries) reported that the service's use of volunteers had been successfully expanded and had added to what the service could offer. She informed members that the service had a volunteering programme for young people, advising that young people were volunteering, for example, to help with the summer reading challenge. She highlighted the case studies within the report relating to volunteering within Libraries.

Ms Bramble reported that she had first become involved in volunteering through an organisation which visited her college to recruit volunteers. She informed members that she had enjoyed her first experience of volunteering at the Sainsbury's School Games in Manchester and so decided to continue volunteering through the MCR Volunteer Inspired Programme (MCRVIP), which focused on engaging people in sporting activities. She outlined some of the volunteering projects she had been involved in, which had enabled her to work with different groups of people, including disabled people. She advised that she was now a university student and believed that her experience as a volunteer and the qualifications she had gained gave her an advantage over other students. She also advised that she had obtained a paid job as a sports coach due to her volunteering experience and that she had been awarded a Young Volunteer of the Year Bronze Award. The Chair congratulated Ms Bramble on her achievements.

A member expressed concern that travel costs could be a barrier to young people volunteering. The Strategic Lead for Neighbourhoods (South) reported that there were a number of organisations across the city offering volunteering opportunities for young people. He advised that officers would look into how these organisations addressed barriers to volunteering, including whether they paid travel expenses, and what could be learnt from this.

A member asked how informal volunteering could be recognised, including whether it could be considered as a Community Contribution for housing purposes. The Strategic Lead for Neighbourhoods (South) advised that officers would look into this as part of the Council's ongoing work on volunteering.

A member noted that the report referred to the establishment of Timebanks which worked by members of the scheme donating an hour of their time and receiving an hour of help from someone else in return, thereby sharing their different skills and knowledge. She requested that the Committee receive a further report on this,

including information on where this approach had been used and how the Council could support its expansion. The Chair also requested that people who used timebanking be invited to a future meeting.

In response to a member's question, Mr Preston reported that 16,000 people were registered on the VCM's database. He advised that research from Sheffield Hallam University in 2013 estimated that approximately 94,000 people were volunteering in organisations in Manchester.

Decision:

To receive a further report on volunteering, focusing on Timebanks, including information on where this approach has been used and how the Council can support its expansion. To invite people who use timebanking to this meeting.

[Councillor Fletcher-Hackwood declared a personal interest as a Trustee of The Place on Platt Lane]

**CESC/17/04 Volunteering in the city – Part Two – Our Manchester
Voluntary and Community Sector Funding**

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) and the Strategic Director (Adult Social Services) which provided an update on how the Council was developing its approach to funding the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), including the infrastructure service, for the future. The Strategic Commissioning Manager introduced the report across its main themes. The Committee welcomed Mike Wild from Macc, Lynne Stafford from The Gaddum Centre and Claire Evans from 4CT. The Strategic Commissioning Manager reported that Ms Stafford, Ms Evans and Martin Preston from Macc had all been members of the co-design group involved in developing the new approach to funding.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Strategic Commissioning Manager for all her work. She advised that, in line with the Our Manchester principles, partners in the VCS had been involved in the discussion from the start and that this work was still ongoing. She advised that the Council remained committed to supporting the VCS, and was continuing to provide grants to VCS organisations, despite the cuts to the Council's budget.

Mr Wild outlined the role of Macc and what they had achieved over the previous year, including helping 3322 people to get involved in volunteering, helping community groups to secure additional funding of £889,643, providing hands-on support to 951 groups and providing email and online support and information to many more organisations. He advised that Macc also worked to influence policy, for example, to get timebanking incorporated into the new health and social care model. The Deputy Leader advised that it was important for the VCS to be involved in the work of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and that Macc was involved in trying to progress this.

Ms Evans reported that this had been a genuine co-design process fully involving the partner organisations. Ms Stafford agreed, advising that the co-design group had had a series of productive meetings involving a diverse range of organisations.

In response to the proposal that organisations which had achieved good outcomes would be favoured for further funding, a member asked about the impact of this on new organisations which did not have a track record. Ms Evans advised that good organisations with good outcomes should continue to receive funding but that this should not exclude new organisations which could demonstrate that they could achieve positive outcomes.

A member expressed concern that some very small organisations were solely reliant on funding from one source and asked how these organisations could be supported to look for other forms of funding or join up with larger organisations. Ms Evans advised that this issue had been discussed by the co-design group and that the second proposed funding model encouraged partnership working and organisations to seek broader funding sources.

The Chair advised that some of the language in the consultation document was not clear and that smaller organisations might not think it was aimed at them. She asked how the Council would ensure that it received a wide range of responses. The Strategic Commissioning Manager reported that the consultation document within the report was a draft version. She advised that it had subsequently been reviewed by the Council's communications teams, who had made the wording clearer and developed it into an online form. She advised that face-to-face consultation events were also being planned.

The Chair thanked the members of the co-design group for their work. She requested that members let her know if they had any suggestions on how to support the VCS in their wards or contact the organisations directly. She recommended that the Committee support the consultation paper, on the basis that the concerns raised about the wording had been addressed. She requested that an item for information, providing a brief update, be submitted to the Committee's March meeting, advising that this might be included as an agenda item for discussion. She recommended that the Committee receive a report on the proposed model following the consultation period.

Decisions:

1. To support the consultation paper, on the basis that the concerns raised about the wording have been addressed.
2. To receive an item for information, providing a brief update, at the Committee's March meeting, which could be included as an agenda item for discussion.
3. To receive a report on the proposed model following the consultation period.

CESC/17/05 Age-Friendly Manchester Strategy

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Adult Social Services) and the Director of Public Health which set out the city's plans for improving outcomes for

older people through the Age-Friendly Manchester (AFM) programme. The report also provided an update on the activities of the AFM programme in 2016/7. The Committee welcomed Bren Fawcett and Dave Williams from the AFM Older People's Board.

The Deputy Leader reported that the approach of AFM recognised the contribution that older people made to the city, rather than just viewing them as people in need of support. She also advised that this work was an excellent example of the Our Manchester approach.

Ms Fawcett reported that, as older people tended to spend more time in their local area, it was important to create Age-Friendly Neighbourhoods, with appropriate infrastructure in place such as seating and well-maintained pavements, and that this work should particularly focus on wards with a higher proportion of older people. She advised that this work would need support from ward councillors and through ward co-ordination meetings. The Chair encouraged members to attend AFM Board meetings.

Mr Williams highlighted the issue of social isolation experienced by some older people. He advised that there needed to be improved communication with older people, using a range of methods, as not all older people were comfortable with using the internet. He reported that it was important to raise the profile of the AFM work and that previously there had been more publicity celebrating the lives of older people in the city.

A member who was also the Lead Member for AFM reported that the strategy represented years of work by the Council and partners and thanked all those involved, highlighting the role volunteers had played. She reported that Manchester's work in this area was internationally recognised. She advised that previous publicity had been successful in challenging negative perceptions of older people but had been cut due to lack of funding. She welcomed that the Council had commissioned Buzz, the wellbeing service provided by the Mental Health Trust, to co-ordinate age-friendly locality networks and neighbourhood age-friendly plans.

The Strategic Lead (AFM) reported that the key priorities for the next 12 months were to improve communications, promoting the AFM brand, and to ensure that the Council and other bodies routinely considered older people in their work. For example, he advised, voluntary organisations should take into account the valuable role that older people could play in their organisations and the design of public spaces should take into account older people's needs.

A member advised that it was important to share best practice between the work on the AFM Charter and on the Homeless Charter and that it would be useful to receive more information on the organisations which had signed up to the AFM Charter.

The member who was also the Lead Member for AFM recommended that, at future meetings, the Committee consider a few specific aspects of AFM's work, advising that it was too large an area of work to consider all aspects at one meeting. The Chair agreed and recommended that she, the Lead Member for AFM and the Strategic Lead (AFM) meet outside of this meeting to agree approximately three

topics which would be the focus of a report, to be considered by the Committee in approximately 6 months' time. She suggested that this include an update on the work to improve communication and publicity of AFM. The Strategic Lead (AFM) suggested that this also include the impact of the AFM Charter on how the Council, NHS and other organisations delivered services and thought about older people. The Chair welcomed this suggestion and recommended that organisations which had signed up to the Charter and, if possible, some of their service users, be invited to attend.

Decision:

To receive a further report in approximately 6 months' time and to request that the Chair, the Lead Member for AFM and the Strategic Lead (AFM) agree the key topics that the report will focus on. To include work to improve communication and publicity of AFM and the impact of the AFM Charter. To invite representatives from organisations which have signed up to the Charter and, if possible, some of their service users.

CESC/17/06 Overview Report

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained a list of key decisions yet to be taken within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

A member requested that representatives from the LGBT Foundation and TransForum be invited to the March meeting for the Transgender Report, to which the Chair agreed.

A member requested that the Committee consider the work of Buzz and how they were engaging with and connecting people across communities. The Chair advised that she would discuss this with officers to ensure that it did not cross into the remit of the Health Scrutiny Committee.

The report on the Manchester Parks Strategy 2017 – 2026 was received late and published in a supplementary agenda due to clearance delays and IT issues.

Decision:

To approve the work programme, subject to the above comments.