

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2017

Present:

Councillor Rawlins - In the Chair

Councillors Cookson, Evans, Fletcher- Hackwood, Grimshaw, Hassan, Knowles, Marshall and Sharif Mahamed

Councillor S Murphy, Statutory Deputy Leader

Councillor B Priest, Deputy Leader

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Culture and Leisure

Councillor Rowles, Assistant Executive Member for Culture and Leisure

Councillor Leech, Ward Councillor for Didsbury West

Frances Davies-Tagoe, Tree of Life Centre

Nigel Rose, Macc

Apologies:

Councillor Cooley

CESC/17/18 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2017 as a correct record.

CESC/17/19 Councillor Call for Action – Brookdale Park

The Committee received a Councillor Call for Action from the Ward Councillor for Didsbury West. The Ward Councillor informed the Committee that his concern related to the decision to demolish the portacabin in Brookdale Park, advising that evidence had not been provided that this decision provided best value for money. He reported that officers had initially supported a proposed community asset transfer, which would have brought the building back into use, using lottery funding. He stated that he was not disputing the decision not to allow a community asset transfer; however, he questioned why it had only been suggested to demolish the building after this decision, as the building had been left unused for some time before this.

The Head of Corporate Estates and Facilities reported that the building was a portacabin/temporary type of structure built in 1985 and had been vacant since 2012. She outlined a number of concerns about the condition of the building and reported that in 2014 a surveyor had recommended its demolition. She advised that, due to the costs of bringing the building to an acceptable standard, maintaining it and securing it, demolition was the most cost effective decision.

The Chair advised that resource issues, such as property management and finance, fell within the remit of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee. She,

therefore, recommended that the Councillor Call for Action be referred to the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee.

Decision

To recommend that the Councillor Call for Action be referred to the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee.

CESC/17/20 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 updated Members on how the Council was developing its approach to funding the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Sector. It asked for Members' views on the proposed model for future funding. The Strategic Commissioning Manager introduced the report across its main themes. The Statutory Deputy Leader reported that, despite cuts to Council budgets, the amount of funding available to the VCS would be the same under the new funding arrangements. She highlighted the vital services that the VCS provided to local people and thanked those who had been involved in the co-design of the new approach to funding.

The Committee welcomed Frances Davies-Tagoe from the Tree of Life Centre and Nigel Rose from Macc, who shared their experiences of being involved in the co-design of the new funding approach. Ms Davies-Tagoe reported that it had been an interesting, positive process and that it had enabled her to voice the concerns and aspirations, not just of her organisation, but of other voluntary organisations. She informed Members that she was proud of the co-design group's impact and the outcome of its work and advised that the new approach should help to further strengthen the vibrant VCS within the city. Mr Rose reported that the final outcome from the co-design group could not have predicted at the start, which demonstrated that it was a true co-design process.

A Member expressed concern that the response rate to the consultation was considered insufficient to produce robust statistics. Mr Rose advised that the consultation was intended to invite a range of responses to enrich the debate and was not intended to produce statistically significant data. Ms Davies-Tagoe reported that there had been many opportunities for people to give their views throughout the process, through a variety of methods, so some people might not have felt that they needed to respond to the consultation.

In response to Members' questions, the Strategic Commissioning Manager reported that careful consideration would be given to the balance of funding between newer and existing groups. She advised that the approach was designed to ensure funding went to organisations which were doing good work, rather than those who were skilled in writing a good funding application. She informed Members that support sessions would be provided to local groups over the summer to make them aware that this funding was open to them. She also outlined how the new funding model would be advertised to VCS groups across the city.

A Member emphasised the importance of having a clear strategy for supporting smaller groups working in local communities. Mr Rose reported that smaller, newer groups could receive support from more established local groups, such as community associations, and that there was a route for them to reach the point where they were able to apply for this funding. A Member expressed concern that smaller groups would still be reliant on Neighbourhood Investment Fund (NIF) funding, which had been reduced by 50%. The Statutory Deputy Leader reported that the intention was to strengthen local voluntary groups to help them to grow and become more sustainable.

In response to a Member's question, Mr Rose advised that it was important that organisations were not reliant on one source of funding; however, he reported that organisations in this position could still be given funding if they scored well on other criteria and that they would then be expected to work to diversify their funding over a period of time.

In response to a question from the Chair, Mr Rose reported that the co-design group was currently considering how organisations in receipt of funding should be monitored but that it would be proportional to the amount of funding received.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Statutory Deputy Leader reported that most VCS organisations were working in an Our Manchester way, although they were not currently using this language to describe what they were doing.

The Statutory Deputy Leader reported that, while none of the funding was ringfenced for particular groups, the Council had a statutory duty to fund carers' organisations and that it would ensure that the criteria enabled them to do this.

The Chair welcomed that the level of funding was being maintained and the time invested in co-designing the new funding approach. She recognised the positive co-design process and advised that the Council should learn from this for future co-design work. She thanked the guests for attending and for their contribution to the development of the new funding approach and requested that the Committee receive a further report at an appropriate time.

Decision

To receive a further report at an appropriate time.

CESC/17/21 Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy – Part 1

The Committee received a report of the Executive Member for Culture and Leisure which provided an overview of work undertaken and progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the Our Manchester strategy for those areas within his portfolio. The Executive Member introduced the report across its main themes.

Members requested further information on a number of areas within the report including the work on widening access to cultural and leisure services, work to

increase the number of people who were physically active, the Cultural Ambition Strategy and the implementation of the Parks Strategy.

The Executive Member for Culture and Leisure reported that the work on widening access had been discussed at previous meetings of the Committee. He provided a further update to Members, advising that he had arranged briefing sessions for Members but that the take-up had been low. He encouraged Members to attend and advised that they could also contact him via email to raise any issues which affected access to cultural and leisure services for particular groups within their ward. He reported that the first 15 parks to have bespoke park plans, as part of the Parks Strategy implementation, had not yet been identified but that he would share this information with Members once it was available. He also offered to provide further details on the statement that one million people in Greater Manchester were now classed as active, to which the Chair agreed.

In response to a Member's question, the Executive Member for Culture and Leisure provided further information on the Curriculum for Life and recommended that a report on this be brought to the relevant scrutiny committee.

A Member expressed concern that there was not sufficient information in the report to enable Members to scrutinise it. The Chair advised that the report provided an overview of the work of the Executive Member for Culture and Leisure and that the Committee could identify from this areas which they wanted to add to the work programme to consider in more detail at a future meeting. She advised that the Committee had previously received reports on a number of the areas referred to in the report and suggested that she arranged to meet with the Executive Member to cross-reference these in order to direct Members to the relevant reports. She also recommended that a report on the Cultural Ambition Strategy be added to the work programme.

Decisions

1. To request that the list of the first 15 parks to have bespoke park plans be circulated to Members, once it is available;
2. To request that the Executive Member for Culture and Leisure provide further details on the statement that one million people in Greater Manchester were now classed as active;
3. To note that the Chair will consult with the Executive Member for Culture and Leisure to cross-reference the areas of work referred to in the report with reports which have been previously considered by the Committee; and
4. To request that the Committee receive a report on the Cultural Ambition Strategy at a future meeting.

CESC/17/22 Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy – Part 2

The Committee received a report of the Statutory Deputy Leader which provided an overview of work undertaken and progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the Our Manchester strategy for those areas within her portfolio. The Statutory Deputy Leader introduced the report, advising that Members might want to consider how future reports from Executive Members could be used to

map progress against targets in the Our Manchester Strategy. The Chair commented that she would raise this issue at a meeting of the Scrutiny Chairs.

The Statutory Deputy Leader answered Members' questions on the Family Poverty Strategy and the implications of Brexit.

A Member expressed concern that community groups in local areas did not yet understand the concept of Our Manchester. The Statutory Deputy Leader reported that the Our Manchester Strategy was a long-term project and that it would take time for it to filter through. She reported that, within the next 18 months, most Council staff would undertake the Our Manchester Experience, an interactive training which would explain the Our Manchester behaviours and principles, and that Members would also be invited to undertake the Experience. She reported that the Experience brought the principles of Our Manchester to life and that the Council should look at how a similar approach could help community groups to understand it.

A Member requested further information on the Disability Confident Employer scheme which the Council was applying to become recognised under. The Chair reported that she had seen a presentation on the Disability Confident Employer scheme and recommended that this be incorporated into a future report on the All Age Disability Strategy.

A Member commented that some of the equality strands were not included within the report. The Statutory Deputy Leader reported that a lot of the work on the equality strands was undertaken by the Equality Lead Members. The Chair, who was also the Lead Member for Disabled People, reported that she would discuss with the other Equality Lead Members how their work could be recorded and shared with Committee Members.

Decisions

1. To recommend that a presentation on the Disability Confident Employer scheme be incorporated into a future report on the All Age Disability Strategy;
2. To note that the Chair will discuss with the other Equality Lead Members how their work can be recorded and shared with Committee Members; and
3. To note that the Chair will discuss with the other Scrutiny Chairs the best format for future reports from Executive Members and how the Scrutiny Committees can consider how the work of Executive Members links into the targets in the Our Manchester Strategy.

CESC/17/23 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.

The Chair recommended that the July meeting consider Community Safety, including Hate Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour, to which Members agreed.

Decision

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