

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2017

Present:

Councillor Fletcher-Hackwood - In the Chair
Councillors Austin-Behan [CESC/17/35 - 36, CESC/17/38 - 39], Cookson, Evans,
Grimshaw, Hassan [CESC/17/37 - 41] and Sharif Mahamed

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure

Christine Cort, Manchester International Festival
Fiona Gasper, Manchester International Festival
John McGrath, Manchester International Festival
Dave Moutrey, Cultural Leaders group

Apologies:

Councillors Ilyas, Knowles, Marshall, Rawlins and Siddiqi

CESC/17/35 Chair

The Committee Support Officer informed members that the Chair had sent her apologies for the meeting and asked for nominations to chair the meeting. A member nominated Councillor Fletcher-Hackwood, which was seconded by another member and agreed by the Committee.

Decision

To appoint Councillor Fletcher-Hackwood as Chair for the meeting.

CESC/17/36 Minutes

Decisions

1. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2017 as a correct record.
2. To receive the minutes of the Hate Crime and Third Party Reporting Centres Task and Finish Group meeting held on 28 September 2017.

CESC/17/37 Manchester International Festival 2017

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which provided a picture of the outcomes of the evaluation of the Manchester International Festival (MIF) 2017 and sought approval from the Executive for new funding arrangements for the festivals which would take place in July 2019 and 2021. The Committee was invited to comment on this report prior to its submission to the Executive on 18 October 2017.

The Committee welcomed Christine Cort, Managing Director of MIF, Fiona Gasper, Executive Director of MIF, and John McGrath, Artistic Director and Chief Executive of MIF. Ms Cort and Mr McGrath introduced the report across its main themes.

A Member welcomed the positive achievements outlined within the report and the development of MIF since its inception.

The Committee discussed how well MIF engaged with Manchester's diverse communities, including communities which were less likely to engage with cultural events.

In response to a Member's question, Christine Cort reported that some discounted tickets were put on general sale for people on lower incomes, while others were made available via a community engagement officer who had directly engaged with 171 community groups to involve people in MIF. She offered to circulate additional information on the groups involved, to which Members agreed. She advised that MIF had made significant progress since the 2015 Festival in engaging with diverse communities but recognised that further work was needed. A Member asked for clarification on the proportion of the tickets being sold directly to individuals and families compared to those being bought by schools or community groups. Ms Cort reported that further details of this would be included in the information she would circulate to Members. Another Member requested that Members also receive a breakdown of the wards that MIF volunteers resided in, for the 201 volunteers who were Manchester residents.

John McGrath reported that the number of free events, including those in the public realm, had been increased to improve participation from diverse communities and that year-round activity was taking place to engage with different communities through the My Festival engagement programme; however, he advised that it was challenging to gather data on those attending free and public realm events and that MIF was looking at how best to address this. He reported that he would welcome Members' support in engaging local community groups in their wards. The Chair recommended that more work be undertaken with local neighbourhood teams to engage local residents with MIF.

In response to a Member's question, Fiona Gasper outlined the sources of funding for the Festival and how MIF worked to secure funding from non-public sector sources. She advised that, if Manchester City Council did not approve the revenue support requested within the report, MIF would have to adjust its plans for the 2019 and 2021 festivals.

In response to a Member's question, Christine Cort outlined how the economic impact of MIF was calculated and reported that the estimated economic impact in 2017 was £40.2 million, compared to £38.8 million in 2015.

In response to a Member's question, Fiona Gasper reported that a skills and diversity audit of the MIF Board had been carried out and new Board Members had been appointed. She reported that the Board was now more diverse and represented more different sectors.

The Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure congratulated MIF for its successes, including its increased economic impact and greater engagement with Manchester residents from different communities. He praised the free event in Piccadilly Gardens 'What is the City but the People?' which, he reported, had reached a wider audience. He advised that, while further work was still needed, he was confident that MIF was heading in the right direction.

The Chair recommended that the Committee endorse the recommendations in the report, to which Members agreed.

Decisions

1. To recommend that more work be undertaken with local neighbourhood teams to engage more local residents with MIF and to request that further information be circulated to Members on the community engagement work, including the community groups engaged with, the proportion of discounted tickets being sold directly to individuals and families compared to those being bought by schools or community groups and a breakdown of the Manchester wards that volunteers resided in.
2. To endorse the recommendations that the Executive:
 - a) Note the substantial achievements of the 2017 Festival in overachieving its objectives, particularly in continuing to grow its international reputation, increasing co-commissioning partnerships, record attendance levels and increased involvement by Manchester emerging artists;
 - b) Recognise and support the importance of maintaining public sector funding commitments in order to attract significant match funding from other public and private sector partners;
 - c) Approve revenue support for both the 2019 and 2021 Festivals of £2million, together with the underwriting of £0.5million for each Festival subject to continuing support from other Public Sector partners, notably Arts Council England; and
 - d) Delegate responsibility to Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) and City Treasurer in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources and Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure to finalise the financial arrangements.

[Councillor Austin-Behan declared a disclosable pecuniary interest as his company was contracted to provide cleaning services for MIF 2017 and he withdrew from the room for this item.]

CESC/17/38 Cultural Ambition Strategy

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which provided an overview of work undertaken to develop and deliver the Cultural Ambition. The Cultural Ambition set out a series of aspirations for

art and culture over the next ten years and demonstrated how the cultural sector could contribute to the delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy. The Cultural Ambition articulated some of the ways in which cultural organisations could work to ensure that opportunities for access and participation were as wide as possible and inclusive of all Manchester residents. The Committee welcomed Dave Moutrey, the Acting Co-Chair of the Cultural Leaders group, who introduced the report across its main themes.

The Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure reported that the Cultural Ambition Strategy was a living document which those in the culture sector took ownership of and he was confident that this would bring about tangible results.

A Member noted that, with support from the Council, the Rogue Artists' Studio had secured new premises and asked about the situation for other arts organisations which struggled with securing appropriate premises. Dave Moutrey informed Members about a working group which was looking at how to make the city a better place for artists to live and work. He reported that this group would be working on the development of a joined-up strategy on the provision of space for artists and on how to support emerging talent. The Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure informed Members about work to engage local young people in the creative sector.

A Member welcomed the report and the priorities set out within it. Members requested that the Committee receive a further report at an appropriate time, including more information on the working groups referred to in the report.

Decisions

1. To note the report
2. To request that the Committee receive a further report at an appropriate time, to include more information on the working groups.

CESC/17/39 Widening Access and Participation

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which provided an update on Widening Access to Culture and Leisure. The purpose of the Widening Access work was to understand resident engagement in services provided by Leisure, Libraries, Galleries and Culture, and to explore routes to increase participation among groups or communities that might be less engaged. The Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) and the Strategic Lead (Libraries, Galleries and Culture) introduced the report across its main themes.

In response to a Member's question, the Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) informed Members that the Council had obtained funding three years ago from Sport England for five community support activators who engaged with under-represented groups. He advised that this work had been very effective and, although the original funding was now coming to an end, the Council was looking for ways to sustain funding for these posts.

The Committee discussed progress in schools' engagement with libraries and the barriers faced in trying to engage with some schools.

A Member suggested that the Council should encourage the Sharp Project to participate in outreach work through libraries and the Strategic Lead (Libraries, Galleries and Culture) advised that he would contact the Sharp Project regarding this.

The Committee discussed the new MCRactive card. The Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) reported that this had recently been launched and the first priority had been to roll it out to people who were already regular users of leisure facilities. He advised that the next phase would be roll it out to the wider population and that he would be looking for any lessons that could be learnt from the Libraries Service and their library card. A Member requested that the Committee receive a further report at an appropriate time, including further information on the roll-out of the MCRactive card.

The Chair noted that the Events Unit was reviewing its approach to engaging with disabled people and ensuring that events were made accessible to and inclusive for all and asked when the outcome of this review was likely to be. The Director of Neighbourhoods agreed to follow this up.

The Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure informed Members that the first stage of the work on Widening Access and Participation had been to gather data on who was accessing culture and leisure facilities and, from there, to identify interventions to increase access and participation. He advised that the Council had set up the MCRactive website, which aspired to bring together in one site all the sport and activity opportunities available across the city, and the MCRactive card, which aimed to provide better demographic data on who was using leisure facilities so that future engagement work could be targeted at those groups which were more likely to be inactive. He advised that the Council would next be focusing on engagement with residents and stakeholders, using the Our Manchester approach. He reported that Members' consultation events would also take place, which he encouraged the Members to participate in. The Chair recommended that the Committee receive and consider the invitation to participate in an Our Manchester facilitated discussion as part of the engagement exercise.

Decisions

1. To receive and consider the invitation to participate in an Our Manchester facilitated discussion as part of the engagement exercise outlined in the report.
2. To receive a further report at an appropriate time, to include further information on the roll-out of the MCRactive card.

CESC/17/40 Manchester Libraries

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which provided an overview of Manchester Libraries over the last 12 months and gave an update on the Library 2020 strategy and future priorities for the service. The Strategic Lead (Libraries, Galleries and Culture) introduced the

report across its main themes. The Committee then watched a short film on Manchester Libraries' involvement in the 'Fun Palaces' campaign for culture to be by, for and with all. It showed how eight Manchester Libraries had been transformed into Fun Palaces for a day on 1 October 2016.

A Member welcomed the progress made by the Libraries Service and the hard work of staff. A Member asked how library staff were trained for the range of queries they could now receive, for example, from residents with housing issues. The Strategic Lead (Libraries, Galleries and Culture) reported that the Council was working to ensure that library staff could signpost people to organisations which could help them and was also looking at how libraries could be used as venues for organisations to provide their services from. He advised that the Council was monitoring for hotspot areas which were receiving a lot of these queries so that they could put appropriate resources in place.

In response to a Member's question, the Strategic Lead (Libraries, Galleries and Culture) outlined proposals for the re-modelling of Withington Library and the option to pilot an Open Library scheme to extend library opening hours.

The Chair noted that, while the use of Manchester Libraries was increasing, book loans were still decreasing and asked how this could be addressed. The Strategic Lead (Libraries, Galleries and Culture) reported that the decrease in lending was smaller than in previous years and compared favourably to the national average. He informed Members about the Read Manchester campaign to promote reading and literacy across the city. The Citywide Services Manager (Reform) informed Members about the Read and Feed pilot which had been aimed at children who were eligible for Free School Meals during term time and included lunch and activities at Fallowfield Library during the school summer holidays. He advised that this had led to an over 150% increase in participation in the Summer Reading Challenge at Fallowfield Library and it was planned to expand Read and Feed to selected libraries across the city next year.

The Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure reported that libraries now played a much wider role than their traditional function of lending books, including being a place people went to for help on a range of issues and which other organisations used as a way of accessing local communities.

A Member advised that, if libraries were struggling to engage with particular schools, they should inform their local Ward Councillor who might be able to assist. The Strategic Lead (Libraries, Galleries and Culture) agreed to take this forward as an action.

Decisions

To note the report.

[Councillor Fletcher-Hackwood declared a personal interest as a trustee of The Place]

CESC/17/41 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.

Decision

To approve the work programme.