

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2018

Present:

Councillor Hacking - In the Chair

Councillors M Dar, Evans, Fletcher-Hackwood, Kirkpatrick and Rawson

Councillor S Murphy, Statutory Deputy Leader

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure

Apologies:

Councillors Cooley and Rawlins

CESC/18/19 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2018 as a correct record.

CESC/18/20 Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Funding

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which provided an update on the Our Manchester VCS Funding Programme including the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) completed following the funding recommendations supported by the Our Manchester VCS Programme Board.

The Statutory Deputy Leader referred to the main points and themes within the report, which included:

- Details of the VCS groups which had been awarded funding;
- The EIA;
- That the EIA included the impact on different geographical areas of the city in addition to looking at protected characteristics; and
- Steps being taken to address the issues identified, including work to strengthen the VCS sector in some parts of the city.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussion were:

- Whether information on why some VCS groups had been unsuccessful in their applications was available;
- Where unsuccessful VCS organisations were supported to build their capacity, would there then be additional funding available for them to apply for;
- Why different VCS organisations were being funded to provide similar activities and why the amounts awarded varied between these organisations; and
- Whether any wards had not received any funding.

Members also discussed the proposals to establish a Task and Finish Group to consider the issues raised about the process in this and previous meetings and to make recommendations on how the process could be improved for future funding rounds. It was proposed that this include consideration of the spread of funding across the city and any areas where there were gaps. It was proposed that this be established as a Task and Finish Group of the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee but that Members of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee also be included in its membership.

It was proposed that three meetings be held, the first being used for Members to identify and expand on the issues to be addressed. It was proposed that external stakeholders, including groups which had been successful and ones which had not, be invited to the second meeting to share their views. The third meeting would then focus on communication with Members, including how local intelligence could be obtained at an earlier stage in the process, and how better quality information could be provided to Members.

The Statutory Deputy Leader reported that, while the details of why individual groups had been unsuccessful were not publically available, some of the common themes related to governance and the organisations' capacity. She outlined how the Council was working with these groups to address these issues. She advised Members that the funding provided was for a three-year period which was beneficial as it provided the successful organisations with greater security. She informed Members that, while funding rounds were only due to take place every three years, the Council was currently in discussions with Manchester Health and Care Commissioning (MHCC) about whether they could make some funding available for an additional round of funding applications. She advised that work to build the capacity of VCS organisations also aimed to put them in a better position to bid for other sources of funding. She reported that some VCS groups provided similar activities but in different or multiple locations and offered to provide Members with additional information. The Programme Lead (Our Manchester Funds) informed the Committee that it would not be possible, with the resources available, to provide funding to groups in every ward but that the aim was to ensure the funding available was spread well across different geographical areas of the city and different communities of interest. He acknowledged that there were currently some areas of the cities where there were gaps, which the Council was working to address.

Decision

To establish a Task and Finish Group to consider the issues raised about the process in this and previous meetings and make recommendations on how the process can be improved for future funding rounds.

CEESC/18/21 Manchester Parks Strategy 2017 – 2026

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods), the Director of Neighbourhoods and the Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) which provided an update on the Parks Strategy 2017 – 2026.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report, which included:

- An overview of the Strategy, including the actions the Council had committed to prioritise in its first three years;
- Progress made against these actions; and
- Resourcing.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussion were:

- Waste management arrangements, particularly on bank holiday weekends;
- How often the play areas were inspected;
- The reduced use of glyphosate in grounds maintenance;
- The importance of providing public conveniences and seating in parks and ensuring that parks were age-friendly; and
- How limited funding was divided between different parks.

The Parks Lead informed the Committee that a new contractor had taken over responsibility for waste management in parks on 26 March 2018. She advised Members that there had been a couple of issues with waste management over the bank holiday weekend, when there had been good weather and high usage of the parks, but that the Council had a good relationship with the contractor and was working to address these issues. She reported that it was also important to persuade the public to use parks responsibly, through both education and enforcement. She also outlined the inspection schedule for the play areas within parks. She informed Members that a trial had taken place in some parks in south Manchester to stop using glyphosate. She advised that the Council was liaising with Friends groups which wanted their parks to be pesticide-free and making decisions on this on a case-by-case basis. She advised that she could provide Members with details of which parks were glyphosate-free.

The Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) informed Members that his team was currently developing a case for £20.5 million of capital investment in parks and that they would be reviewing priorities with Friends groups, including the provision and location of toilets. He cited the re-development of Alexandra Park as an example of working with age-friendly groups to ensure suitable seating was available for older park users and assured Members that this approach would be used elsewhere. He outlined the funding that had been invested in Manchester's 144 parks, for example, through the Clean City Fund and section 106 agreements. He informed Members about future funding plans, stating that the Council needed to invest smartly to reduce the gap between income and expenditure. He advised the Committee that Heaton Park and Wythenshawe Park had the biggest potential to bring in significant income and, therefore, they would receive a larger share of this investment to help to realise this.

Decision

To note the report.

CESC/18/22 Future Leisure Arrangements

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which provided the outcome of work to develop a new Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, develop the detailed design of Manchester Active and undertake a full procurement exercise to assess the full costs and benefits for the delivery of operational arrangements for 20 leisure centres. It also provided details of the transitional arrangements required to implement this work. The Committee was invited to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Executive on 30 May 2018.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report, which included:

- The consultation on the revised Sport and Physical Activity Strategy;
- The Strategy's themes;
- Manchester Active;
- The sport and leisure provider network; and
- Leisure centre contracting arrangements.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussion were:

- What strategies would help more people become active;
- Whether new infrastructure, such as outdoor gyms, would encourage more people to become active;
- The importance of traditional sports and helping existing clubs and facilities to be sustainable;
- Whether the new provider would be committed to the Our Manchester approach;
- Concern that Sport England funding had focused on elite sports rather than encouraging more people to become active; and
- Whether representatives of sports clubs could be included on the Manchester Active Board.

The Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) informed Members that responses to the consultation indicated that people wanted to participate in activities such as walking, running, cycling and swimming which were easy to engage in, available in their local area, low cost, not too competitive and which they could participate in as and when was convenient. He reported that people wanted more activities like Parkrun taking place in their local area. He advised that there were 800 sports facilities in Manchester and that, rather than needing to create more infrastructure, there was a need to 'activate' the existing infrastructure – ensuring that there were sports programmes or groups in place to encourage people to use the facilities. He advised that he was seeking additional investment to increase the number of 'activators' and that their role included working with existing sports clubs to help them to become self-sustaining. He informed the Committee that the Our Manchester approach was incorporated into the tendering documents for the new leisure provider and that this had been part of the assessment process. He advised Members that Sport England was now focusing more on tackling inactivity and that Greater Manchester had been chosen as one of the pilot areas for this work, which would provide significant investment. He reported that 39 sports organisations would be

involved in the advisory board which would underpin the work of the Manchester Active Board and that they would be consulted on key decisions.

Decisions

1. To endorse the recommendations to the Executive that:

The Executive is recommended to:

1. To consider and note the findings from the strategy engagement and consultation and approve the adoption of the proposed vision, strategic themes and actions to deliver the strategy over the next 10 years.
 2. Delegate authority to the Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) in consultation with the Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure and Deputy Chief Executive, to complete the production of the strategy document for communication with residents, visitors, partners and businesses.
 3. Agree to the governance arrangements proposed for implementing the strategy (Manchester Active) and note the decision to be taken by the City Treasurer and Deputy Chief Executive, Growth & Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Executive Member for Schools to award a contract to Manchester Active in June.
 4. To note the analysis undertaken on the Leisure Centre arrangements and the decision to be taken by the City Treasurer and Deputy Chief Executive, Growth & Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Executive Member for Schools to award a contract in June, subject to consent from relevant stakeholders.
 5. Delegate authority to the City Solicitor to enter into, complete and execute any documents or agreements necessary to give effect to the recommendations in this report.
2. To recognise the value of service user involvement at every level and to ask the Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) to give further consideration to having representatives from sports clubs on the Manchester Active Board.

CESC/18/21 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 reminded Members that they would be discussing the work programme for the Committee at the rise of this meeting.

Decision

To note the report.