

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 7 March 2019

Present:

Councillor Hacking – in the Chair

Councillors Andrews, Cooley, M Dar, Douglas, Evans, Kirkpatrick, Rawlins and Rawson

Also present:

Councillor N Murphy, Deputy Leader

Councillor S Murphy, Statutory Deputy Leader

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure

CESC/19/12 Minutes

Decisions

1. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2019 as a correct record.
2. To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Fund Task and Finish Group held on 31 January 2019.

CESC/19/13 Greater Manchester Police (GMP) priorities for additional resources

The Chair reported that the purpose of this item had been to examine the priorities for the additional funding for GMP which it was proposed to raise through the Council Tax precept. He informed the Committee that the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA's) Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime had declined to attend the meeting and that the representative of GMP had stated that some of the information requested was not yet known and, therefore, he had also declined to attend at this stage. The Chair proposed that this item be considered again at the Committee's meeting on 23 May 2019, when further information would be available, including whether the precept had been agreed and whether GMP would be receiving any additional resources from the national government. In response to a Member's question, he confirmed that the intention was to invite the Deputy Mayor to the May meeting.

The Deputy Leader reported that he represented the Council on the Police and Crime Panel, which had met on 31 January 2019 to consider the precept, but that he thought it was also useful for this Committee to scrutinise the precept and how the additional funding would be used. He reported that the national government had acknowledged that the police were underfunded but had decided that additional funding should be raised through a precept on Council Tax. He outlined the funding issues which GMP faced, reporting that it had lost over 2000 police officers over the past 9 years, in addition to 1000 support staff, including Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). He reported that at the Police and Crime Panel meeting he had

proposed a commitment, which the Panel had supported, on the issues which should be prioritised with these additional resources. He informed Members that these included increasing neighbourhood policing, improving safety on the transport network and in the night-time economy, improving the 101 non-emergency police number and other ways that the public could contact the police, tackling serious and violent crime and violence against women and girls and improving sickness levels within GMP.

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

- The impact of losing 1000 support staff in diverting police officers from frontline duties;
- To seek assurance from the Deputy Leader that he would advocate for the needs of the Manchester area;
- The impact of football matches on the city centre and police and Council resources; and
- That information on police priorities should be communicated to residents in a clear, simple way.

The Deputy Leader recognised the greater demands that Manchester experienced due to being the regional centre, noting that 13 of the 50 new police officers had been assigned to Manchester. He outlined how police prioritised work based on threat, harm and risk. He reported that football was a great draw to the city but that it also created some issues for the city and that, while the football clubs contributed to the cost of policing around the stadium, it also had effects elsewhere. He reported that the Council was working with GMP and the football clubs on this issue and that he would pass on the Committee's concerns. He agreed that it was important to communicate police priorities to residents in an appropriate way.

Decision

To consider this issue at the Committee's next meeting on 23 May 2019.

CESC/19/14 Equalities Performance Management

The Committee received a report of the City Solicitor which provided an update on the Council's Equalities Performance Management.

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

- Progress against the Council's equality objectives for 2016-20, with examples across a range of service areas;
- The proposed process for developing a new set of objectives covering the period 2020-2024; and
- An overview of the themes emerging from the Council's Equality Delivery Plans (EDP) 2019-20, produced as part of the annual business planning process.

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

- To welcome the report and the breadth of work taking place and to emphasise the importance of this becoming embedded into the regular work of the Council;
- That equality should be embedded into the induction process for new staff;
- How the Directorate Equality Champions' role fitted in with their regular jobs;
- The importance of good education, training and employment opportunities in improving life chances;
- When undertaking an equality analysis of major commercial developments, what would a good commercial development look like;
- The importance of prioritising repairs to pavements and highways as an equality issue;
- The importance of timely Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) in relation to proposed new cycling and walking routes;
- How far the Council's workforce reflected the diversity of the local population, particularly at a senior level; and
- Request for more information on the work group which had been established to develop the Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

The Lead for Homelessness informed Members how equalities work was being embedded into her service's work, including listening to the views of people who had experienced homelessness and working to help people improve their life chances. The Director of Housing and Residential Growth informed Members about work to develop the LGBT Extra Care housing project, reporting that he was currently in discussions with the LGBT Foundation to try to secure funding for them to provide a member of their staff to advise on the project. Officers provided examples of work taking place within the Neighbourhoods Directorate, including improving the accessibility of leisure facilities for disabled people, capturing data on who was using the Council's leisure facilities and working with school children and their families on healthy eating, taking into account cultural backgrounds and languages.

The Statutory Deputy Leader reported that most Manchester schools were judged as "good" or better by Ofsted but that issues with particular schools needed to be addressed. She also reported on how the Council would use its procurement process to encourage companies to employ Manchester residents and to pay the Manchester Living Wage. She informed Members about the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter, which, she advised, would also make a difference.

The Director of Housing and Residential Growth reported that he would refer the question on commercial developments to the Strategic Director (Development) and ask him to provide a response. A Member who was also the Lead Member for Disabled People emphasised the importance of ensuring that commercial premises were accessible for disabled people.

The Strategic Lead for Neighbourhoods (South), who was also a Directorate Equality Champion, reported that he had requested timescales for the programme of repair work to pavements and highways and for the proposed new cycling and walking routes so that EIAs could be embedded into the process. The Chair emphasised the Committee's support for this information to be provided so that this work could be progressed as a matter of urgency.

The Head of Workforce Strategy reported that people with protected characteristics, particularly disabled people and BAME staff, were under-represented at a senior level within the Council. He informed Members that the Council had developed an action plan on workforce equality which was based on feedback from the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) assessment and a piece of independent research on staff experiences. He outlined the main areas of this action plan, which related to workforce engagement, learning and development and representation at a senior level. The City Solicitor reported that, as the new Equalities Lead for the Senior Management Team (SMT), she would take forward the request that equality be embedded into the induction process for new staff.

The Programme Lead outlined the work which had started to take place to develop and support BAME voluntary and community organisations, including undertaking EIAs following the first funding round of the Our Manchester VCS Fund and meeting with BAME groups and other stakeholders to discuss issues and identify a way forward. The Statutory Deputy Leader reported that this work had to be sector-led but facilitated by the Council and she offered to provide further information to a future meeting.

Decision

To thank officers and guests for their contribution and to request that the points raised by Members be taken forward.

CESC/19/15 Final Report of the Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Fund Task and Finish Group

The Committee received a report of the Our Manchester VCS Fund Task and Finish Group which presented their findings and recommendations. The Task and Finish Group had carried out an investigation into the implementation of the new OMVCS Fund programme and the first funding round.

A Member, who was also the Chair of the Task and Finish Group, provided an overview of the Group's findings and thanked the Members who had taken part.

The Chair asked for clarification of the meaning of the fifth bullet point under 2.2: "Communication relating to funding decisions/decision making process to be updated to include simultaneous communications to organisations and all Members (in addition to scrutiny committees)." The Chair of the Task and Finish Group clarified that this meant that information would be disseminated simultaneously to organisations and Elected Members. She informed Members that she would amend the wording of this bullet point for clarity.

The Chair welcomed the report, stating that it was an example of a good piece of work by a Task and Finish Group. He requested that this report be circulated to all Members of the Council, with a covering note.

Decisions

1. To note the findings of the Task and Finish Group and endorse the recommendations as set out in the report, subject to the amendment for clarity outlined above.
2. To request that the report be circulated to all Members of the Council.
3. To request a report on the implementation of the recommendations in 6 months.

CESC/19/16 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 note the report and agree the work programme.

CESC/19/17 Manchester Community Events

The Committee received a report of the Chief Operating Officer (Neighbourhoods) which provided an update on the approach to developing the Community Events Programme. It also provided further details of how events supported volunteering within the city and specifically how the programme connected to the Manchester Volunteer Inspired Programme (MCRVIP).

The Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) informed Members that this report provided an update on community events which took place across the city, including events that the Council directly delivered such as the Christmas lights switch-on, large community events that the Council provided funding for such as the Caribbean Carnival and other events which were not funded through the events fund but which the Council supported in some other way, for example through the Neighbourhood Investment Fund (NIF).

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

- The negative impact of some events on local residents and what was being done to increase safety and security around events, citing the shooting which had taken place after the Caribbean Carnival last year;
- Request for an update on the assessment of applications for the Community Events Funding Programme 2019-20; and
- The strain on NIF funds of continuing to fund small community events and whether alternative funding could be identified.

The Strategic Lead (Parks, Leisure and Events) informed Members that meetings were taking place with a range of stakeholders to discuss issues surrounding the

Caribbean Carnival, including parking, trading on nearby streets and after-show parties and tactics to address these were being explored. He reported that, while an early decision had been taken regarding the funding for this year's Caribbean Carnival, decisions were still being made about other applications to the Community Events Funding Programme 2019-20 and it was expected that the decisions would be communicated by the end of the month. He reported that, where appropriate, applicants were being directed to other sources of funding which were more appropriate for their event.

The Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure reported that, despite the financial challenges, the Council had continued to invest in community events but was also being innovative in supporting organisations to identify other sources of funding. He reported that the Council was looking at ways to generate commercial income from parks and events which could be reinvested in community events.

Decision

To request that a list of groups which were successful and unsuccessful in obtaining funding through the Community Events Funding Programme 2019-20 be circulated to Members, including details of whether the groups have been funded in previous years.

[Councillor Evans declared a personal interest as a Board Member for the Wythenshawe Games.]

[Councillor Douglas declared a personal interest as a local resident in the area of the Caribbean Carnival.]

CESC/19/18 Exclusion of the Public

Decision

To exclude the public during consideration of the following item which involved consideration of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of particular persons and public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

CESC/19/19 Manchester Core Events Programme Funding 2019/20 (Public Excluded)

The Committee received a report of the Chief Operating Officer (Neighbourhoods) which provided commercially sensitive information on the allocation of funding for the core events programme for 2019-20, following the Committee's request for this information at its meeting on 10 January 2019.

Decision

To note the report.