

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 5 September 2023

Present:

Councillor Hitchen (Chair) – in the Chair

Councillors Doswell, Good, Ogunbambo, Rawson, Sheikh, Whiston and Wills

Also present:

Councillor Midgley, Deputy Leader

Sandy Koujou, Caribbean African Health Network

Saria Khalifa, NESTAC

Apologies: Councillor Azra Ali and Appleby

CESC/23/34 Minutes

In moving the minutes, the Chair requested an update on the committee's request made at the previous meeting for further information on CEF-funded events. The Governance and Scrutiny Team Leader confirmed that this request had been accepted since the agenda was published and that the information would be shared with members at the earliest opportunity.

Decision: That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 18 July 2023, be approved as a correct record.

CESC/23/35 Communities of Identity

The committee considered a report of the Joint Director of Equality and Engagement - NHS GM Integrated Care (Manchester locality) and Manchester City Council which detailed the inequalities faced by 'communities of identity' within the city and how specific groups accessed and were supported by Council services to improve their experience and outcomes.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- An introduction and background;
- The definition of 'Communities of Identity';
- The Council's intersectional approach to inequality and insights into communities;
- Key learning and areas for development;
- The 3 equality objectives to support the city in becoming more progressive and equitable:
 - Knowing Manchester better
 - Improving life chances
 - Celebrating our diversity
- Examples of how these objectives were being delivered on.

Key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussion included:

- What work was being undertaken to support Bangladesh, Pakistan and African Muslim women to enter the workplace;
- How the Communities of Identity work would improve health outcomes;
- Noting the gap in education and employment opportunities for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, and querying how the Council would try to reduce the stigma for this community;
- Noting that there was no mention of class as an intersectionality;
- How the learning from work on Communities of Identity would be utilised in the Council's approach to Equality Impact Assessments;
- Requesting that further information on the SEND activities offered during the school holidays be provided;
- How confident officers were that those groups who work with Communities of Identity were being reached;
- Noting the stark median age at death of Asian/Asian British background males with profound and multiple learning disability and the higher mortality in pregnancy rate amongst Black and Asian women, and querying what could be done to improve this;
- Requesting that quantified data be clearer in future reports;
- Requesting that the financial and revenue implications of delivering this work be included in future reports; and
- Requesting that a benchmarking exercise be undertaken to quantify how well Manchester was doing in its work with Communities of Identity against other core cities.

The Deputy Leader stated that Communities of Identity was last reported on in 2016 and that this report aimed to explain how the Council understands and engages with communities.

The Joint Director of Equality and Engagement expressed her thanks to the University of Manchester, Lancaster University, the Assistant Chief Executive and his team, the Equalities Specialist and a number of Council departments who had contributed to the report. She explained that Communities of Identity referred to 'people who share particular characteristics connected to their heritage, belief system or identities that contribute to their day-to-day lives' and stated that the report focused on communities that experienced greater and more entrenched inequalities, such as those communities which experienced racial inequality, disabled people and older people. Other communities, such as LGBTQI people, were also recognised as having experience of entrenched inequalities and the committee was informed that a more detailed analysis of these experiences would be provided at the next meeting.

The Joint Director of Equality and Engagement highlighted some data sources, such as the recent Census, and noted that there was still work to be done to identify the impacts of inequalities in an intersectional manner and to remove some key barriers.

The Local Offer and Engagement Manager and the SEND Engagement and Young Carers Lead attended the meeting and provided an overview of their work to co-produce a summer activity offer with parents and carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

In response to the committee's queries, the Joint Director of Equality and Engagement explained that work would be undertaken with the Work and Skills team to improve access to the workplace and that some work had already been undertaken to identify the barriers to employment faced by Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. A Joint Strategic Needs Analysis was also being undertaken for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community and an Inclusion Health Group had been established to improve engagement. It was noted, however, that more work was required to improve cohesion between Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and other communities.

Members were advised that Community Health Equity groups had completed a lot of work with particular communities and there was specific work being undertaken around breast screening with Pakistani women, as data indicated there was a lower uptake within this community. The Council was also working with BHA for Equality to assess experiences of primary care.

The Assistant Chief Executive explained that the Census had been a great resource for Communities of Identity and when looking at intersectionality. He highlighted that particular areas of interest could be reviewed in more detail to inform the committee and ongoing work.

In response to a member's query regarding how this learning would inform the Council's approach to Equality Impact Assessments (EIA), the Joint Director of Equality and Engagement stated that a refresh of the approach to Equality Impact Assessments was underway and that this would include detailed guidance with case studies on best practice for completing these Assessments. The Equalities team would also provide support for colleagues undertaking an EIA.

The committee was informed that a lot of work was being undertaken around community engagement. It was acknowledged that communities changed frequently and that there were some established communities and some new and developing ones so there was a need to change and evolve engagement methods. This was a theme under Making Manchester Fairer and focused on building trust with communities to work together.

In answer to a member's query regarding the greater breakdown of ethnicity, the Assistant Chief Executive explained that this was available for each ward through the Census and that this information would be provided outside of the meeting.

In respect of the Chair's queries around health inequalities experienced by Asian, Asian British and Black men and women, the Joint Director of Equality and Engagement explained that the report remained a live document which could be

updated to reflect the Council and local partners' responses to issues. She noted that there were some significantly entrenched structural inequalities within health and that some partners were undertaking work around learning difficulties, including liaising with ethnic minorities with learning difficulties to identify how to better engage with this community.

Further clarity was sought on whether the health outcomes of Communities of Identity were within the remit of this committee or the Health Scrutiny Committee.

She further highlighted that several initiatives were underway across the health service to reduce mortality rates amongst Black and Asian pregnant women and that these figures were decreasing. Work needed to continue to reduce this, and it was highlighted that this would require changes in behaviour and attitude.

In response to the Chair's query around how it would be ensured that delivery models for the Equality Objectives were placed into areas with the most need, the Assistant Chief Executive stated that this would need to be built into the Council's Corporate Plan, business plan, and budget with a recognition that tackling inequalities was of high importance, which he stated the Council had done over the past years. He highlighted the Council's cost-of-living support as an example of this, with granular evidence used to identify where need was greatest and to proportionately target resources to certain areas within Manchester.

The Chair wished officers good luck in their work to deliver the Equality Objectives and thanked guests for their attendance.

Decision:

That the committee

1. notes the progress made to date on delivering the Equality Objectives;
2. expresses their support for the approaches to working with communities and areas for further development outlined in the report;
3. requests further information on class as an intersectionality;
4. requests further information on the SEND activities on offer during school holidays within each ward;
5. requests a greater breakdown of information by ethnicity for each ward;
6. requests that quantified data be clearer in future reports;
7. requests that the financial and revenue implications of delivering this work be included in future reports;
8. recommends that Equality Implications be strengthened within committee reports to highlight how the sufficiency of service provisions within wards are taken into consideration for each report; and
9. requests that a benchmarking exercise be undertaken to quantify how well Manchester is doing in delivering the Equality Objectives against other core cities.

CESC/23/36 Domestic Abuse and Safety of Women and Girls

The committee considered a report of the Strategic Director – Neighbourhoods which summarised recent and current work to address domestic violence and abuse, including implementation of the Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and victim voice work, and provided an update on ongoing work to promote the safety of women and girls in the city.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- 75% of all offences recorded during 2022-23 were against women;
- Strong correlations between high volumes of domestic abuse incidents and areas of the city with the highest deprivation scores relating to income, employment, education and skills, and health and disability;
- The objectives and achievements of the Council's Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy;
- Training and development work;
- The work of Early Help Hubs;
- Work undertaken with perpetrators which was commissioned in conjunction with GMCA from Talk Listen Change (TLC);
- Work being undertaken to support children and young people affected by domestic abuse;
- Support and services for victims of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM);
- Support and services for male victims of domestic abuse;
- Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews;
- The Women's Night-time Safety Charter and Good Night Out Guide; and
- Current issues and challenges, such as demand for the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) service.

Key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussion included:

- Noting that not all buildings in the city's parks were council-owned, and querying whether these facilities would be expected to take part in the Safe Spaces initiative;
- How domestic violence affected LGBT and asylum seeker/refugee communities;
- The importance of talking to primary school children about healthy relationships;
- How staff were trained to be trauma-informed;
- Requesting that members also receive the quarterly Performance Bulletins;
- The high level of repeat offences;
- Noting that, whilst domestic violence can occur anywhere, it was more prevalent in deprived areas;
- What the Council could do in collaboration with housing providers and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to ensure perpetrators of domestic violence are removed from the home;
- Whether any preliminary findings were available from the work undertaken with the Independent Choices Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Helpline

to better understand the recent change in distribution of volumes of calls across the city;

- What advice the Council would give to victims of spiking;
- Whether housing providers were also implementing a Sanctuary Scheme and whether this was consistent across the city;
- How the Council could provide quick interventions to those at risk of domestic violence;
- Whether there were areas within parks that were specifically tailored to women and girls;
- How the Council held GMP to account on the time taken to deal with domestic violence cases;
- Whether members could refer individual cases to the Gender Based Violence Board;
- Suggesting that a representative of Greater Manchester Police be invited to attend when considering future reports on domestic violence;
- How the Community Safety team works with the Neighbourhood teams to improve feelings of safety for residents when out at night; and
- Whether trends were noticeable within Domestic Homicide Reviews and what lessons are learnt from these.

The Deputy Leader stated that there continued to be high levels of domestic abuse and that the effect of this on survivors, families and children was traumatic and highlighted the work being undertaken in the city. The Strategic Lead Officer for Community Safety highlighted key issues around domestic abuse in Manchester and the service provision. She noted that there had been a decrease in the number of high-risk incidents which she believed was as a result of early intervention work. It was stated that the work on safety of women and girls was broader than that on domestic abuse but was included within the report as it was fundamental to the societal change required to address domestic abuse.

Representatives from the Caribbean African Health Network and NESTAC attended the meeting to provide an overview of their organisations and the services they provide, which the committee welcomed.

In response to members' queries, the Strategic Lead Officer for Community Safety explained that the Safe Spaces initiative was still in its early stages of development and engagement with the Libraries and Parks teams was underway. Further discussions would need to take place to identify appropriate premises to take part in the initiative and what would be required of staff to deliver this safely. It was confirmed that training would also be provided to the 'Friends of' groups.

The Domestic Abuse Reduction Manager advised that two Greater Manchester-based services had been commissioned to address domestic violence within the LGBTQI community. This included the Safe Accommodation project, which provided access to one-bedroom flats and wider outreach support for LGBTQI people, and an LGBT Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) provision. Manchester City

Council was the highest referrer to both of these schemes within Greater Manchester.

The Domestic Abuse Reduction Manager acknowledged the need to promote healthy relationships to young girls as well as boys, as some figures around their behaviour was of concern. Work on addressing this issue in primary schools was being led by Healthy Schools and was included in the Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy action plan.

The committee was informed that the Council was committed to ensuring that staff and partners have access to trauma-informed training. All IDVA staff, domestic abuse providers and MARAC partners were trauma-informed trained.

In response to a request from the committee, it was confirmed that the quarterly Performance Bulletins and Needs Assessments would be shared with members.

The Strategic Lead Officer for Community Safety shared members' concerns over the high level of repeat offences of domestic violence and emphasised the importance of understanding the impact of early intervention work and this would continue to be monitored.

With regards to the powers available to the Council, housing providers and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to ensure perpetrators of domestic violence are removed from the family home, the Domestic Abuse Reduction Manager explained that there were measures in place to allow the police to remove a perpetrator from a property and Manchester had the highest number of these Orders secured within Greater Manchester. She further explained that the Domestic Abuse Act brought into force Domestic Abuse Protection Orders which GMP would be piloting from June 2024 and would provide more stringent measures to remove a perpetrator for longer and allow the imposition of monitor tags and curfews. The importance of early intervention work was reiterated to help victims remain in their home, community, and support network. Work was ongoing with the Homelessness team to increase access to the Sanctuary Scheme and other security measures.

There had been a significant increase in the number of people accessing the Sanctuary Scheme since 2021 and work was ongoing with housing providers to ensure a consistent approach with their offer. Further information on the approach of housing providers had been requested by officers.

It was confirmed that there were no preliminary findings available from the work undertaken with the Independent Choices Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Helpline to better understand the recent change in distribution of volumes of calls across the city, but these would be shared once available.

The Strategic Lead Officer for Community Safety advised that work had been undertaken with partners to ensure an appropriate response to incidents of spiking and this would continue to be discussed.

In response to a query regarding possible quick interventions where there is a risk of domestic violence, the Strategic Lead Officer for Community Safety explained that this would be dependent on the individual circumstances.

The safety of women and girls in the city's parks was a major focus for the Parks team and were represented on the Safety of Women and Girls Board, which drove forward work on domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and other forms of Violence against women and girls, to ensure that suitable activities were available in parks. The Strategic Lead Officer for Community Safety advised that there were specific sports and leisure activities commissioned for women and girls.

In response to a question around how GMP were held to account, the committee was advised that there were a number of systems in place such as the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and a forum for partners to discuss performance and delivery on the Domestic Abuse Strategy action plan. The GM Gender Based Violence Board was also highlighted as an example of a forum to raise issues with the GM Deputy Mayor. The Domestic Abuse Reduction Manager provided assurances that the Council worked closely with GMP on an operational and strategic level.

Members were advised that the Gender Based Violence Board did not review individual cases but that they could email the Community Safety team if they had any specific concerns about cases.

The Community Safety Policy and Performance Manager endeavoured to inquire whether Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) received data on the time taken to deal with domestic violence cases.

Street safety was acknowledged as a focus area within the report and there was significant work being undertaken to improve this, although it was noted that there was limited resource within the Community Safety team, and this needed to be a cross-council piece of work. The Council also worked closely with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to ensure safety of residents using public transport and a number of different projects had been funded with officers looking at rolling out similar schemes to those in Oldham and Rochdale. A further report could be provided on this with a focus on women and girls.

In response to queries around Domestic Homicide Reviews, the Community Safety Policy and Performance Manager explained that each Review generated an action plan to be dealt with either by a single agency or the Partnership. These action plans were tracked to identify themes, such as unconscious bias and services making every effort to maintain engagement with people they were working with. These themes are then assessed strategically by a range of partners and agencies.

In closing the discussion, the Chair asked guests what they would like the Council to do to improve domestic violence service provisions across Manchester. Sandy Koujou, of the Caribbean African Health Network, expressed that she would like to

see further help for the programmes already in operation and for the Council to promote the support available for victims and survivors. Saria Khalifa, of NESTAC, explained that she would like the Council to continue to encourage GMP to investigate incidents of domestic violence quickly and efficiently.

The Chair thanked guests for their attendance and their work in the community and thanked officers for their strategic work in championing victims and making Manchester safer.

Decision:

That the committee

1. notes the report;
2. requests that quarterly Performance Bulletins be shared with members;
3. looks forward to receiving a future report on the safety of women and girls, including the work and projects being undertaken to promote this across the city and how these are funded;
4. requests further information on the specific sports and leisure activities commissioned for women and girls and the suitable activities available for women and girls in individual parks; and
5. requests that enquiries are made with GMCA regarding data on the time taken for domestic violence incidents to be dealt with by GMP.

CESC/23/37 Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Impact Report 2023-26 Update

The committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive on the impact of the Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector grant programme (OMVCS) 2018-2023.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background to the Impact Report;
- The Council had invested £12 million into the OMVCS programme;
- Highlights and findings of the report, such as that over 588,000 service users had been supported across all of the 63 funded organisations;
- How the OMCVS fund aligned with the aims of the Our Manchester Strategy;
- Next steps for monitoring and reporting on the 2023-26 programme of funded activity.

Key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussion included:

- Welcoming the work of the voluntary sector;
- How officers had come to the figure that over 588,000 service users had been supported across all funded organisations, given that Manchester's population was 547,000;

- Whether the issues raised by those groups whose funding bids were unsuccessful had been resolved;
- Whether mentorships through the Conversation 2 Cash programme were followed up on; and
- Whether the mentorship programme could be extended to Wythenshawe; and
- If the progress and achievements of the funded work was monitored and evaluated.

In response to members' queries, the Policy and Programmes Manager (Communities and VCSE) noted that there was a statistical error with regards to the number of service users supported and that this figure represented the amount of contact with residents. The final version of the report would have an amended figure.

Assurances were provided that all issues raised following the allocation of funding had been resolved and that officers had signposted those unsuccessful in receiving funding to alternative support for funding and organisational development. A further report on the refreshed Infrastructure Contract would be provided to the committee in December 2023.

The Policy and Programmes Manager (Communities and VCSE) informed members that Conversation 2 Cash was a programme based in North Manchester which linked grassroots organisations to peer mentors within the VCSE sector to undertake development work. He advised that all peer mentors had received training with mentorships now underway. This was a specific piece of work which was undertaken as a result of the North Manchester inquiry, but the funding profile of the city demonstrated a shift away from funding to North Manchester, although he noted that there was not a robust data set to demonstrate funding contributions across the city. This was an ongoing piece of work and the Policy and Programmes Manager (Communities and VCSE) acknowledged that it was possible for a similar approach to be implemented in the south of the city in future.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Policy and Programmes Manager (Communities and VCSE) stated that there was a commitment to create an end-of-year report on the progress and achievements of organisations in receipt of funding and these could be brought to the committee for consideration.

In closing the discussion, the Chair thanked officers and voluntary organisations for their work. She acknowledged that the Council should have been able to deliver some of the services provided by VCSE groups but were unable to due to government cuts imposed over previous years.

Decision:

That the report be noted.

CEESC/23/38 Overview Report

The committee considered a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which 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 queried whether a report would be provided to the committee on the new Customer Relationship Management system. Officers agreed to look into this outside of the meeting and would provide an update for members.

Decision:

That the report be noted, and the work programme agreed.