

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 5 September 2019

Present:

Councillor Hacking (Chair) – in the Chair

Councillors Chambers, Collins, M Dar, Doswell, Douglas, Grimshaw and Rawson

Also present:

Councillor S Murphy, Deputy Leader

Councillor Craig, Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure

Councillor Clay, Ward Councillor for Burnage

Councillor Davies, Ward Councillor for Deansgate

Councillor Lanchbury, Ward Councillor for Higher Blackley

Brian Hilton, Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP)

Dennis Queen, GMCDP

Geoff Bridson, Manchester resident

Apologies: Councillors Kirkpatrick and Rowles

CESC/19/29 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2019 as a correct record.

CESC/19/30 Review of Advice Services in Manchester Task and Finish Group

The Committee received a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which provided the draft terms of reference and work programme for the Review of Advice Services in Manchester Task and Finish Group. The Committee was asked to agree the terms of reference, work programme and membership of the Task and Finish Group.

The Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing outlined the current situation in relation to the provision of advice services. She informed Members of other work taking place to improve advice services, including the Manchester-wide Advice Forum, and advised Members of the expertise of stakeholders which the Task and Finish Group could draw on. In response to a question from the Chair, she reported that the Task and Finish Group would need to feed back by the end of November 2019 in order for its recommendations to be taken into account in the development of the budget proposals.

The Ward Councillor for Burnage, who was one of the Members who had called in the key decision to appoint a provider to deliver citywide advice services, which had been considered by the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee at its 7 February 2019 meeting, welcomed the review.

The Chair reported that the Membership of the Task and Finish Group would be restricted to Members of the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee but that other Members of the Council were welcome to attend meetings and contribute.

Decisions

1. To agree the terms of reference and work programme.
2. That Councillor Hacking be appointed as Chair of the Task and Finish Group and that Councillors Collins, M Dar, Doswell, Douglas and Grimshaw be appointed to the Task and Finish Group.
3. To ask the Scrutiny Support Officer to email all Members of the Committee to invite any further requests to join the Task and Finish Group.

CESC/19/31 Peterloo Memorial

The Committee received a report of the Director of Strategic Development which provided an update on the implementation of the Peterloo Memorial, and progress on the work undertaken to determine the most appropriate solution to ensure it was fully accessible.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure referred to the main points and themes within the report, which included:

- Update on the design;
- Update on the Council's processes for access consultations; and
- Current position.

Brian Hilton from the GMCDP informed Members that the campaign to make the memorial accessible had received support from disability rights campaigners, the general public and public figures, as well as receiving media attention and he thanked the Committee for their continued interest. He informed Members that the information in the report was broadly accurate but that he wanted to clarify a few issues. He reported that the campaigners' preferred option was to add a ramp to the memorial and that, while they did not want the memorial to be demolished and re-built, they believed that a complete re-design should remain an option if there was no other suitable alternative. He also expressed concern about the option of building a lift to the top of the memorial, highlighting that a number of lifts within the city centre were out of order. He reported that campaigners would also like the option of a bridge to the top of the memorial to be considered. He advised Members that they would also welcome the opportunity to be more actively involved in this work rather than just being asked to comment afterwards. He also commented that it was important that decisions were not made hastily and that disabled people were involved in the design and consultation. He reported that the campaign group was producing an advice note on consulting with disabled people which they hoped the Council would adopt. He expressed the group's commitment to working with the Council, not only on the memorial, but on improving the Council's engagement with disabled people and ensuring that accessibility was embedded into its projects, policies, practices and procedures.

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

- To thank the campaigners for having brought this issue to the Committee's attention earlier in the year and to welcome that, following the involvement of the Scrutiny Committee, the Council was now working to address this;
- To ask for further clarification on how the disability campaigners would be involved in the design process and in improving Council processes;
- That the Committee would receive a report on the broader issues around embedding accessibility into the Council's processes in a future report;
- Whether a see-through ramp had been considered to enable access while ensuring that the memorial was fully visible; and
- Whether the memorial could be fenced off in the interim when large-scale events were held to ensure people weren't using it until it was fully accessible.

The Development Manager informed Members of the discussions he had had with Mark Todd, another disability campaigner with expertise on accessible designs, regarding the design options for a ramp and confirmed that he was happy for Mark to liaise directly with the architect. The Equalities Specialist advised Members that the disability campaigners would be fully involved in the work to improve the Council's processes in relation to accessibility.

The Development Manager reported that he had asked the architect whether a see-through ramp would be possible.

The Ward Councillor for Deansgate welcomed the commitment to finding a solution to this issue. She also welcomed the broader work to review the Council's approach to accessibility issues and asked if this would include consideration of the impact on disabled people of transport changes in the city centre caused by temporary events. The Equalities Specialist confirmed that it would.

Geoff Bridson, a Manchester resident, asked if other groups involved in the campaign for and creation of the Peterloo Memorial, such as historical groups, would be involved in the discussions about the memorial. The Development Manager informed Members that representatives of the Peterloo Memorial Campaign Group had attended one meeting and he would ensure that they were kept involved. Dennis Queen from GMCDP informed the Committee that the disability campaigners had been keeping in touch with the Peterloo Memorial Campaign Group over this issue.

In response to a question from Brian Hilton, the Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure confirmed that the Council would look at all options, including the bridge which they had suggested.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure stated that the memorial would not be fenced off in the interim. Dennis Queen reported that the campaigners did not want the memorial to be closed off and that, while they had asked other campaign groups to stand with them in solidarity at the bottom of the memorial during political gatherings, they did not expect members of the public to avoid standing on the memorial.

Decisions

1. To note that the Committee will receive a report on embedding accessibility into the Council's processes at a future meeting.
2. To continue to monitor this issue.

CESC/19/32 Manchester's Language Diversity

The Committee received a report of the City Solicitor which provided an overview of language diversity in Manchester, and considered work undertaken by the Council to recognise, respond to and celebrate this aspect of the city's diversity. It also considered how this work could be continued and strengthened in future.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- The Multilingual Manchester Project;
- M:4 Communication and Language Support Service;
- Multilingualism in Education, Key Stages 1 – 4;
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL);
- Multilingualism in the workforce;
- UNESCO City of Literature; and
- International Mother Language Day.

The Committee watched a video of the Made in Manchester Poem, which celebrated the city's linguistic diversity.

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

- That the Made in Manchester Poem was excellent;
- Were there any plans to make the Council's multilingual offer, which was described as 'disparate' in the report, more cohesive;
- How young people with English as an Additional Language (EAL), particularly those with difficulty providing identity documentation, could be helped to access the Our Pass free bus pass for 16 – 18 year olds;
- Request for further information on the involvement of student volunteers in the Multilingual Manchester Project;
- Request for further information on ESOL provision; and
- Whether there was ongoing funding for the Talk English scheme.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager clarified that the comment in the report about the Council's multilingual offer being 'disparate' was not intended to suggest that there were gaps in provision; however, it was recognised that there was no centrally-held record of all the multilingual activities being carried out by different Council services. He confirmed that officers intended to develop such as resource which recorded the Council's overall offer and to work with partners to develop this into a Manchester offer, which could then be analysed and strengthened, where appropriate. He advised Members that issues such as access to Our Pass could be addressed through this work.

The Safeguarding Lead for Education provided examples of some of the ways student volunteers contributed to this work, for example, Arabic-speaking science undergraduates teaching a science lesson in an Arabic supplementary school.

The Area Adult Education Manager informed Members that her service usually had to re-apply for funding for the Talk English scheme on a yearly basis and that the current funding was due to end in March 2020. She advised that her service did not yet know whether further funding would be available to apply for but that, if it was, her view was that the service would be in a strong position to obtain that funding; however, she reported, that the service was also developing a sustainability plan, in case there was no further funding from this source.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure suggested that the Committee receive a report on ESOL, including the work of Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES), at a future meeting, to which the Chair agreed. The Area Adult Education Manager informed Members about the ESOL Advice Service which was being launched in September 2019. She also encouraged Members to visit its website at <https://manchesteresol.org/>.

Decisions

1. To receive a report on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), including the work of Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES), at a future meeting.
2. To ask the Scrutiny Support Officer to circulate the link to the ESOL Advice Service website to Members of the Committee.

[Councillor Hacking declared a personal interest as a governor at Manchester College.]

CESC/19/33 Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Fund

The Committee received a report of the Director of Policy, Performance and Reform which provided an update on the Our Manchester VCS Fund and the ongoing programme of work being delivered by the Our Manchester Funds Programme Team.

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

- The Population Health Targeted Fund;
- The North Inquiry; and
- Next steps.

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

- To welcome that the report referred to the recommendations of the Our Manchester VCS Fund Task and Finish Group being taken forward;
- Whether longer-term help would be available to groups who had not been successful in the first round; and

- To welcome the North Inquiry, outlined in appendix 4 of the report, and to seek assurances that the issues that arose in the first funding round would not be repeated.

The Deputy Leader informed Members that longer-term support would be available for groups which had not been successful in the first round and that the stronger, successful groups were expected to lead within their area and partner with and support groups which were struggling. In response to a Member's question on whether this would lead to resentment between groups, the Programme Lead (Our Manchester Funds) reported that this was not just about larger groups leading smaller groups as many small to medium-sized groups had been successful in obtaining funding. He outlined how his team had used their relationship with the VCS groups to foster collaboration between groups. He reported that their approach was not to force particular groups to work together but to give them a choice of different groups they could work with, for example, groups with a similar delivery model or with shared values.

The Ward Councillor for Higher Blackley informed Members about her involvement in the North Inquiry and its findings and reported that she would be involved in the Steering Group which was being set up to ensure that the issues identified were addressed.

Decision

To note the report.

CESC/19/34 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 informed Members that it had been decided that it was not appropriate to invite VCS groups to this meeting as part of the previous item but that they would be invited to a future meeting.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme.