

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 10 October 2019

Present:

Councillor Hacking – in the Chair

Councillors Andrews, Chambers, Collins, M Dar, Doswell, Douglas, Evans, Grimshaw, Kirkpatrick and Rawson

Also present:

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure

Dave Moutrey, Director and Chief Executive (HOME) and Director of Culture (Manchester City Council)

Apologies: Councillor Hitchen and Rawlins

CESC/19/35 Minutes

Councillor Andrews was unable to stay, gave his apologies and left the meeting.

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2019 as a correct record.

CESC/19/36 Culture Overview

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods which provided an overview of work to support the city's cultural offer. It highlighted work to deliver the Cultural Ambition and the 2019 Culture Awards. It also outlined work by the cultural sector to support the city's zero carbon target.

Dave Moutrey, Director and Chief Executive of HOME and Director of Culture for Manchester City Council, referred to the main points and themes within the report, which included:

- The Culture Team's core priorities;
- The Cultural Ambition 2016-25;
- Cultural impact data;
- The 2019 Culture Awards; and
- Zero carbon and the climate emergency.

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

- To request more information on the Winning Hearts and Minds pilot project;
- Whether there were any further plans for projects to be taken out into the community, for example, to care homes;
- Whether any work was taking place to engage with homeless people;

- To welcome that all the staff at HOME were trained in carbon literacy and ask what was being done to promote this across other cultural venues; and
- Whether all staff in the culture sector were being paid the Manchester Living Wage.

Dave Moutrey informed Members that the Winning Hearts and Minds project which would take place in four wards in north Manchester and was about changing people's lifestyles to improve health outcomes. He reported that he and the Head of Libraries, Galleries and Culture had been invited to be involved to see how the culture sector could contribute to this work. He also informed Members that the Engagement Network was mapping wards to identify which areas were currently under-served by cultural events and looking at how to get a better distribution of cultural engagement activity across the city. He advised that there was a lot of interest in working in care homes but that this required significant resources as sustained engagement was more beneficial than a one-off cultural activity.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure outlined work to widen access to and participation in libraries, leisure and culture and informed the Committee that they would be receiving a report on this work at a future meeting. He reported that a lot of work had been taking place in the culture sector to engage with homeless people, including a Homelessness Summit. The Head of Libraries, Galleries and Culture provided examples of the ways his service was supporting the participation of homeless people, including waiving the identification requirements to use the library for homeless people who were unable to provide these documents and providing reading material in homeless centres. He reported that further information on the work in this area could be shared with Members.

Dave Moutrey reported that the Manchester Arts Sustainability Team (MAST) involved representatives from Manchester cultural organisations and that MAST was involved in a programme to train trainers on carbon literacy so that carbon literacy training could be embedded within organisations. He informed Members about proposals for the Council to embed requirements about carbon literacy training for staff into the funding agreements for cultural organisations which the Council funded.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure reported that the culture sector in Manchester was leading the way in reducing its carbon footprint and that other cities were looking at what Manchester had done in this area. He also informed Members that any organisation which the Council provided funding to was required to pay staff the Manchester Living Wage.

Decisions

1. To agree to receive a presentation on the results of the 2018/19 Cultural Impact Survey at the next meeting.
2. To request statistics on the workforce in the cultural sector, including demographic information, the use of zero hours contracts and payment of the Manchester Living Wage.
3. To request an update on the Winning Hearts and Minds project.

4. To request mapping information on access to and engagement with arts and culture by ward.

CESC/19/37 Manchester Art Gallery's Update

The Committee received a report of the Director of Manchester Art Gallery and the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods which detailed Manchester Art Gallery's programme, reach and social impact during 2018/19 and 2019/20 within the context of its strategic plan.

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

- Manchester Art Gallery's vision and objectives;
- Visitor and volunteer information;
- Work with schools;
- Targeted outreach in areas with lower levels of engagement with the Gallery; and
- The Gallery's programme of work, including exhibitions, the redevelopment of Platt Hall and the Manchester Together Archive.

The Committee watched a short film about Manchester Art Gallery.

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

- To welcome the work being done by Manchester Art Gallery;
- How engagement with schools could be improved;
- Whether the Queen's Park Conservation Studios in Harpurhey could be opened up to the public to encourage engagement from people in the local area;
- The work to re-develop Platt Hall; and
- What was the future for the Manchester Together Archive, the physical and digital record of the spontaneous public response to the Arena attack of 22 May 2017.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure outlined how the Council had worked to engage with schools to encourage them to take up the cultural offer which was available to them and promote its benefits. He encouraged Members to engage with schools in their ward to encourage them to take this up. The Director of Manchester City Galleries reported that lack of transport and lack of time in the school week could impact on schools' ability to engage with the cultural offer and he expressed concern that arts and culture were being phased out of the curriculum nationally. He informed Members that he had recently joined the Board of Manchester Cultural Education Partnership (MCEP) with the intention of introducing art into the curriculum of Manchester schools and promoting visual and emotional literacy in children. He advised that creativity should be embedded across the whole curriculum. In response to a Member's question, the Director of Manchester City Galleries reported that education professionals would be on the MCEP Board and involved in the development of this work.

The Director of Manchester City Galleries reported that the building in Harpurhey had previously been an art gallery and was now a storage facility and conservation studio for the city's collections; however, he advised that providing public access to the building would create some challenges, due to security issues. The Senior Operational Lead (Manchester City Galleries) reported that consideration with being given to having a publicly-accessible collection on this site.

The Senior Operational Lead reported that the redevelopment of Platt Hall would be a collaboration with the local community, where communication, transparency and co-production with local people were key in order to develop something which was sustainable and community-driven.

The Senior Operational Lead informed Members that the Gallery currently had funding for the Manchester Together Archive until July 2020 which was to create digital content for the archive. She reported that an application had been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a further three years of funding which, if successful, would be used to develop the public offer for the physical material, while ensuring a contemplative personal space for those most affected to engage with the material.

Decision

To note the report.

CESC/19/38 Manchester Libraries: Our Manchester - Our Libraries

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods which provided an update on the Library 2020 strategy and presented future plans for Our Manchester - Our Libraries.

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

- Background information, including the role libraries played in local communities and library usage figures;
- Progress in relation to the Library 2020 Strategy, which began in 2016; and
- The aims of the Library 2025 vision.

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

- To congratulate the Library Service on what it had achieved in transforming the service while facing budget cuts;
- The changes in the way people were using the Library Service, for example, increasing borrowing of e-books and the use of libraries for events and activities, putting them at the heart of the community;
- How the service could recruit more volunteers and diversify its volunteer base;
- Oldham Council's decision to abolish library fines; and
- The role of the Library Service in helping people with benefit claims, including benefit validation and signposting people to other services.

The Head of Libraries, Galleries and Culture reported that the service was keen to recruit more local volunteers and was now taking a more targeted approach to

volunteer recruitment. He advised that the service would look at opportunities to engage young people who were using the library service with volunteering, particularly in relation to ICT support.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure reported that the Council was considering whether to abolish library fines, looking at both the advantages and the disadvantages, but no decision had been made as yet.

The Chair requested that a representative from the Library Service attend the next meeting of the Review of Advice Services in Manchester Task and Finish Group to discuss the service's role in providing support to residents seeking information and advice on benefits and other issues.

Decision

To request that a representative from the Library Service attend the next meeting of the Review of Advice Services in Manchester Task and Finish Group to discuss the service's role in providing support to residents seeking information and advice on benefits and other issues.

CESC/19/39 Archives+ 5 Years On

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods which provided an overview of the Archives+ Partnership, five years on from the reopening of Manchester Central Library, where the partners operated. It provided information on participation and engagement with Manchester residents and provided insight into each of the partners and examples of the partners working together for the benefit of Manchester residents.

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

- The Archives+ exhibition area;
- The Archives+ partners and how they worked together;
- Collections development;
- Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership; and
- Future priorities of the Archives+ Partnership.

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

- To recognise what the service had achieved and to ask what the vision was for the next five years; and
- That there was a high level of engagement with primary schools but less engagement with secondary schools and was there any plan to increase engagement with secondary schools.

The Head of Libraries, Galleries and Culture reported that the vision for the service was to build on its strengths, to engage more with children and young people and to get the archive out into community venues across the city. He advised Members that the MCEP would provide an opportunity to get people's history onto the school curriculum.

Decision

To note the report.

CEC/19/40 Manchester UNESCO City of Literature

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods which provided an overview of Manchester's UNESCO City of Literature designation and the work to establish a governance model that would enable the city to live up to its commitments to UNESCO and maximise the opportunities that the designation would bring.

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

- Background to Manchester City of Literature;
- Anticipated benefits of the UNESCO City of Literature designation;
- Commitments to UNESCO;
- Vision and governance model for Manchester City of Literature;
- City Council involvement in Manchester City of Literature; and
- Manchester City of Literature project activity.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure reported that the Council was looking at developing a number of initiatives as part of the UNESCO City of Literature designation and suggested that, at an appropriate time, the Head of Libraries, Galleries and Culture circulate a list of the planned initiatives to Members of the Committee.

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

- To welcome the work outlined in the report;
- Whether this work had received any European funding which could be affected by Brexit;
- What tangible benefits there might be for people working in the literary sector; and
- Whether existing literature by Manchester authors would be showcased as part of this.

The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure confirmed that there was no European funding involved in this. He reported that this work had been funded by the Council, Manchester University and Manchester Metropolitan University, although he advised that they would be seeking funding from other sources in future. He informed Members that the aspirations behind the UNESCO City of Literature application were to stimulate the literary sector in the city, promote partnership working, give opportunities to aspiring writers and improve literacy rates.

The Citywide Services Manager (Reform) informed Members that one of the key aims of Manchester UNESCO City of Literature was to nurture the local literary scene which would be done through working collaboratively with local groups. He also reported that Central Library would have dedicated shelving showcasing books by local authors and publishers. The Head of Libraries, Galleries and Culture reported

that the Manchester UNESCO City of Literature status would also be used to raise awareness of activity which was already going on in the city.

Decision

To note the report.

CESC/19/41 Item for Information: Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Infrastructure Service Update

The Committee received an item for information from the Director of Policy, Performance and Reform which provided an update on the VCSE infrastructure service, specifically on the progress since January 2019 and the procurement of the new VCSE infrastructure service contract.

The Chair reminded the Committee that this was an item for information only. He noted that the report stated that the Programme Team would consider the communications strategy, particularly how they and Macc, the contract provider, could regularly engage Members on the work of the VCSE infrastructure service contract. He reported that he would meet with an officer from the Programme Team to discuss a communication plan for keeping Members informed. He also recommended that, following the contract negotiations, Macc and officers from the Programme Team be invited to a meeting of the Committee to discuss what Macc's outputs would be.

Decisions

1. To note that the Chair will meet with an officer from the Programme Team to discuss a communication plan for keeping Members informed.
2. To request that that, following the contract negotiations, Macc and officers from the Programme Team be invited to a meeting of the Committee to discuss what Macc's outputs will be.

CESC/19/42 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 advised that, given the number of items scheduled for the next meeting, he would discuss with officers whether some should be deferred to a later meeting.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme.