

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2021

Present:

Councillor Hacking - In the Chair

Councillors Shaukat Ali, Andrews, Battle, Chambers, Connolly, M Dar, Douglas, Evans, Grimshaw, Hilal, Sheikh, Whiston and Wills

Also present:

Councillor Rahman, Deputy Leader

Councillor Midgley, Executive Member for Health and Care

Councillor Rawlins, Executive Member for the Environment

Councillor Cooley, Lead Member for Disabled People

Councillor Davies, Ward Councillor for Deansgate

Mark Todd, Peterloo Memorial Access Campaign

Dennis Queen, Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People

Apologies:

Councillor Azra Ali, S Judge, Rawson and Wilson

CESC/21/22 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2021 as a correct record.

CESC/21/23 Peterloo Memorial

The Committee received a report of the Director of City Centre Growth and Infrastructure which provided an update on the decision taken in respect of the Peterloo Memorial following the public meeting on 3 March 2021, and the comments received during and after the meeting.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Background information;
- The public meeting which took place on 3 March 2021; and
- Comments submitted by people who were unable to attend the meeting.

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

- To note that the Committee had asked for a review of planning processes to identify the failings in this case and ensure that they were not repeated in future and that the Executive Member for the Environment would be taking this forward;
- How would the Council ensure that people and organisations it commissioned were also committed to accessibility;

- To thank those involved in trying to find a solution to this, in particular the campaign group, and to welcome that the Council was working to ensure accessibility for other memorials, such as the Glade of Light; and
- That the Memorial should be promoted to all communities as not everyone was aware of the event that it marked.

The Deputy Leader assured Members that, when the Council commissioned work or a service from an external organisation, accessibility would be stipulated in the conditions of the contract. He advised that the Council could also influence external organisations to take into account accessibility where they had to engage with the Council through the planning process or because they wanted to use public land. He stated that the Peterloo Massacre was an important moment in Manchester's history and that it was important that as many people as possible knew about it. He reported that a review of statues and monuments in the city was currently taking place and that most people who had responded wanted to understand the history around them, both good and bad.

Mark Todd, speaking on behalf of the Peterloo Memorial Access Campaign and the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People, advised that this had now gone past the point of trying to work with the artist and the architect to find a solution. He reported that he and the other campaigners had developed a detailed proposal for a solution to make the Memorial fully accessible to disabled people and that they wanted to work with the Council to see if this could be delivered.

The Lead Member for Disabled People proposed that she meet with Mark Todd, the Deputy Leader and the Executive Member for the Environment to look at this new proposal. The Chair welcomed this, advising that it was best that this was pursued outside of the scrutiny process now, in order for it to be progressed more quickly.

The Ward Councillor for Deansgate welcomed the opportunity for this to be looked at from a fresh approach. She suggested that, in addition to informing the public about the events of Peterloo, perhaps through QR codes, the mistakes that had been made with the Memorial could also be recorded. She expressed regret that, while Deansgate Councillors had raised the issue of accessibility during the process, they had perhaps been too easily satisfied with the response and thanked the campaigners for their work and patience. The Chair suggested that the Deansgate Councillors be invited to the meeting to discuss the new proposal, to which the Lead Member for Disabled People agreed. A Member suggested that the Council's partners could be approached to provide a contribution towards the costs of making the Memorial fully accessible.

Decisions

1. To note the report.
2. To welcome that the campaign group and representatives from the Council will be meeting to explore the new proposal being put forward.

CESC/21/24 Support for the culture sector in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Culture which provided an update on support for the culture sector in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic since the Committee last considered this at its meeting on 11 March 2021. The Committee was also provided with a copy of the previous report, including the Culture Recovery Plan, as background information.

The main points and themes within the presentation included:

- Positive impacts of the original Culture Recovery Plan;
- Emergency grant funding received;
- Priorities going forward;
- Approach;
- Stimulus Programme; and
- Resources,

In response to a question from the Chair about the postponement of the lifting of restrictions and the uncertainty that the sector was having to deal with, the Director of Culture confirmed that it was making things difficult for organisations but advised that most of them had anticipated that the timeline for lifting restrictions could change. He reported that, for example, the Manchester International Festival had put in place plans for the festival taking place under either Stage 3 or Stage 4 of the lifting of restrictions. He advised that the main challenge was the financial impact and recruiting freelance crew and security staff as many people who worked in this sector had now taken jobs elsewhere which were more secure.

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

- How the Committee would continue to monitor this area and the next steps being taken, including the work of the Cultural Recovery Board and the impact of the funding being allocated, noting that the Committee might look at some of this in a future report;
- The impact of the pandemic on mental health and the effect that culture could have in ameliorating this;
- The impact of the restrictions and the delay in lifting them on small music venues and nightclubs and support for these businesses;
- Monitoring and responding to shifting patterns of behaviour, such as people working from home; and
- To thank staff, the Executive and partners for the work they had done during the pandemic.

The Director of Culture advised that discussions had taken place with the NHS about the campaign for encouraging people to return to cultural venues and it had been decided to go for a more subtle approach about the joy that cultural events could give to people, rather than explicitly referencing health. He informed Members that direct support was being provided to help small venues apply to various cultural relief funds and that they had been working closely with the Music Venues Trust. He reported that Manchester had been more successful in obtaining cultural relief fund grants

than anywhere else and that some venues and individuals had also received funding through the local emergency fund. He advised that the levels of collaboration between different organisations and venues had been higher in Manchester than elsewhere. He also reported that plans were constantly being updated.

The Principal Policy Officer advised that a fuller picture of the impact of the pandemic and the recovery would be known when the next Cultural Impact Survey, relating to 2020, was carried out and through the following one, which would cover 2021. He advised that, while the level of public appetite for returning to cultural venues could be seen, at present venues were having to operate at a reduced capacity, due to the restrictions, and that this was only financially viable because of the additional funding they were receiving so there was still a risk at the dates when various support schemes were due to end.

Decision

To note the update.

[Councillor Whiston declared a personal interest as a Board Member of Community Arts North West.]

CESC/21/25 The impact of climate change as it relates to the responsibilities for the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

The Committee received a report of the City Solicitor which aimed to provide a discussion point for the Committee as to the areas within their responsibility where the impact of climate change was of particular relevance. It was also for the Committee to determine which areas within its remit it would like to receive more information on and debate further.

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

- Background information;
- Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) actions of relevance to the Committee's remit; and
- A framework for considering climate change.

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

- The retrofitting of housing, including the challenges related to properties which were privately rented;
- Family poverty, including fuel and the costs relating to electric vehicles;
- Recycling, noting that while this did not fall within the Committee's remit, the Committee could look at recycling within the leisure estate;
- The use of disposable plastics; and
- The importance of engaging people from all communities in action on climate change.

The Executive Member for the Environment advised that there were clear targets in relation to being plastic-free, that the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny

Committee would be looking at these issues and that Members of this Committee could receive the reports and, where it related to the remit of this Committee, attend the meetings.

The Chair advised that this item had been a starting point from which items for the work programme could be identified and which could be referred back to during the year.

Decision

To note that the points raised would be taken into account when planning the work programme.

CESC/21/26 COVID-19 Update

The Committee received a presentation of the Consultant in Public Health and the Head of Neighbourhoods which focused on the vaccination programme and how communities had worked together to support its roll-out.

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

- First and second dose coverage;
- Inequalities in vaccine coverage broken down by ethnicity, ward and deprivation;
- Work to increase coverage; and
- The important role of volunteers.

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

- To thank everyone involved for their work, including the volunteers;
- Positive experiences of vaccination centres;
- Vaccination of students and what could be done to encourage more young people to be vaccinated;
- In the prioritised wards, what had been the response to the direct engagement with residents to encourage vaccine take-up;
- That there was confusion among some residents about how effective the vaccines were against the Delta variant and that this should be made clearer in vaccination campaigns;
- The difference in vaccine take-up rates between different groups and could mosques, churches and temples be used as vaccination sites over a longer period;
- That there should be more walk-in vaccination centres, as some people were not registered with a GP, and that schools and colleges should be considered as locations for these; and
- Take-up of the second dose.

The Consultant in Public Health informed the Committee that her service was working closely with the universities to get as many students vaccinated as possible before they went home for summer and that in the eight prioritised wards vaccines

had been offered to people aged 18 and over earlier than nationally. She also explained work taking place to promote vaccination to young people more broadly and reported that a Young People's Engagement Plan had been developed. The Executive Member for Health and Care stated that she would send Members more information about this work. She advised that the response of young people to the vaccination programme had been positive so far and that messages about testing and self-isolating also needed to be communicated to this age group. A Member asked that some data on why particular areas were being targeted be shared to tackle some of the myths about this.

The Head of Neighbourhoods advised that the response to the direct engagement with residents had been mixed because the people being approached were the ones who had not responded to the vaccination campaign so far. She advised that her service would be offering more help to enable people to access the vaccine, for example, helping people with booking an appointment or with their transport needs if they were struggling to get to a vaccination site.

The Consultant in Public Health advised that two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine provided a very good level of protection against serious illness and death from the Delta variant and that one dose still had some effectiveness. She advised that she would take forward the point that the vaccination campaign should communicate more about its effectiveness against the Delta variant.

The Consultant in Public Health advised that in each ward consideration was being given as to where was the best place in that area for a pop-up or walk-in vaccination centre and that schools were considered. She reported that more people could be vaccinated at a fixed site than at a pop-up vaccination site but it was recognised that pop-ups were popular so a balance between the two was needed. She advised that take-up of the second dose was generally good but that it varied across different communities and different parts of the city and also depending on the vaccine, as coverage in the media about the Astra Zeneca vaccine had deterred some people. She advised that people who had not attended for their second dose were being contacted to find out why and discuss any concerns they had.

Decision

To note the report.

CESC/21/27 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 highlighted that suggestions for reports from the work programming session which had taken place last month had been added to the work programme and that the suggestions from today's item on Climate Change would also be taken into account when planning the work programme. In response to a Member's request for a further report on Cultural Recovery, the Chair advised that the

Committee usually received a report on the Cultural Impact Survey and it was likely that it would continue to do so.

Decision

To note the report.