

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2021

Present:

Councillor Hacking - In the Chair

Councillors, Shaukat Ali, Andrews, Chambers, Connolly, M Dar, Evans, Grimshaw, Hilal, S Judge, Rawson, Sheikh, Wills and Wilson

Also present:

Councillor Craig, Deputy Leader (Finance)

Councillor Rahman, Deputy Leader

Councillor Midgley, Executive Member for Health and Care

Councillor Rawlins, Executive Member for the Environment

Councillor Newman, Lead Member for Age Friendly Manchester

John McGrath, Manchester International Festival (MIF)

Menaka Munro, MIF

Apologies:

Councillors Azra Ali and Whiston

CESC/21/45 Minutes

The Chair informed the Committee that discussions were ongoing about the Mayor of Greater Manchester or the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime attending a future meeting.

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2021 as a correct record.

CESC/21/46 Neighbourhood Directorate Budget 2022/23

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which stated that, following the Spending Review announcements and other updates, the Council was forecasting an estimated shortfall of £4m in 2022/23, £64m in 2023/24 and £85m by 2024/25. The report set out the high-level position. Officers had identified options to balance the budget in 2022/23 which were subject to approval.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Current budget position;
- Headline priorities for the services;
- Revenue budget strategy, including changes approved for 2022/23 as part of the 2021/22 Budget Process and new proposed changes; and
- Capital budget and pipeline priorities.

In response to a Member's question about the funding of the leisure operator GLL, the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) advised the Committee that the proposed ongoing support to GLL was a short-term requirement in response to the impact of

COVID-19, that the Council was confident that GLL's financial position was improving as the leisure sector's recovery continued and it was expected that this would be paid back as part of overall budget arrangement.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) reported that budget reports were being considered by all six scrutiny committees this week, that it was expected that the financial settlement from the Government would be announced in December 2021 and that the scrutiny committees would receive further reports in February 2022, before the proposals were submitted to the Executive; however, she advised that, if the financial settlement from Government caused significant concern, the scrutiny committees could receive further budget reports in January 2022.

Decision

To note the report.

CESC/21/47 Manchester International Festival 2021

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which provided an overview of the outcomes of the 2021 Manchester International Festival (MIF21). The report provided a summary of performance against the agreed objectives and detailed the impact of the festival, based on the results of the independent evaluation. The report demonstrated how the festival delivered an inspiring programme which enabled Manchester residents and wider audiences to return to the city to enjoy arts and culture, despite the challenges and uncertainty of COVID-19.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Context (the COVID-19 pandemic);
- Assessment of delivery of objectives for 2021, which were:
 - To continue to grow the international reputation of the Festival and the city – with artists, audiences, partners and media coverage from all five continents and from a wide variety of backgrounds – in turn driving reach for the Festival, attracting people to the city and the best staff to our team;
 - To bring the most extraordinary artists from around the world to Manchester to create diverse and inspiring new work – made in Manchester and shared across the globe;
 - To connect in new and ever deeper ways with the city and region of Manchester, increasing the range and diversity of those engaging with the Festival, with an ever more visible and transformative presence in the city; and
 - To develop the brand, profile and awareness of MIF/The Factory locally, nationally and internationally in readiness for opening.
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), sustainability and financial performance;
- Zero carbon;
- Employment and skills;
- Manchester International Festival 2023; and

- Future Manchester City Council support for the Festival and The Factory.

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

- The attendance figures, including how they were arrived at for free non-ticketed events and whether additional data was available on where people attending ticketed events were from;
- That neighbourhood organisers had an important role in promoting culture and making it as available as possible and were these temporary or permanent roles; and
- That more events should take place in different neighbourhoods, not just in the city centre.

John McGrath, Artistic Director and CEO of MIF, reported that the attendance figures for the non-ticketed events were based on the same methodology as had been used for events such as the Olympics and that this involved an estimate of the flow of people through the area and, for the work in Piccadilly Gardens, a visual survey of the percentage of people passing through who had stopped to look at it. He highlighted the value of using public spaces to introduce people to the Festival and advised that this could then encourage them to attend ticketed events. In response to the question about the breakdown of people attending ticketed events, he advised that the Audience Survey had previously been mainly carried out by email but that not everyone responded and those that did were not necessarily representative of all attendees. He reported that this year, in addition to the email survey, face-to-face surveys had been carried out at some events, although he recognised that more work was needed to improve the data gathered, particularly ensuring that it was representative of the whole audience. He advised that the data in the report providing a breakdown of the attendees combined data from both ticketed and free events but would be skewed towards attendees at the ticketed events. In response to the Member's request, he advised that he would look at whether data could be provided specifically relating to the ticketed events. He reported that it appeared that the audience was becoming more representative of the communities in the city. He advised that, particularly from the 2025 Festival onwards, MIF was looking at making the Festival less city centre focused and locating work in neighbourhoods, especially areas further from the city centre whose residents might not travel into the city centre, including Wythenshawe and some areas of north Manchester.

Menaka Munro, Senior Engagement Manager of MIF, reported that the three neighbourhood organisers in Manchester had been short-term roles from January to August as part of a pilot programme. She advised that this had been very successful and that MIF had learnt a lot about the areas covered by the pilot and as well as gaining learning and feedback which would shape the model of the programme in the future. She advised that MIF wanted to continue this work and more than double the number of neighbourhood organisers in Manchester and that the organisation was reviewing which areas of the city should be involved in this.

The Deputy Leader informed Members about work that had been taking place in the city over the past few years to widen access to and participation in cultural activities and highlighted that MIF had held activities and events outside of the city centre. He

agreed that the neighbourhood organisers' work was important and should be continued.

In response to questions from the Chair about how the pandemic would affect the way the Festival was delivered in future and how international festivals could respond to the challenge of climate change, John McGrath outlined how MIF had taken strong steps into the digital realm from the 2017 Festival onwards. He reported that MIF had been able to use this experience to adapt quickly in response to the pandemic, making the digital content a year-round-offer, rather than being specific to the Festival period, and both commissioning big, international artists for online projects and promoting local and up-and-coming artists. He advised that this would now be a permanent part of MIF's work. He reported that, in light of climate change, international festivals were re-thinking their approach and that part of this involved having work available online. He informed Members that consideration was also being given to air travel, sets and the impact of shipping materials for the Festival. He advised that, although MIF did commission international artists, a lot of this involved making work in the city, for example getting artists to work with local communities over a few weeks, rather than flying them in for a couple of days for a show. He highlighted the "What is the City but the People?" show from the 2017 Festival which had involved 100 local people and was now a touring show, advising that when it toured internationally only one person needed to travel with it as it was made with local people in the city it was visiting.

Decision

To thank the guests from MIF for attending and for their work.

CESC/21/48 Age Friendly Recovery

The Committee received a report of the Consultant in Public Health (Ageing Well Lead), following on from the report to the Committee in December 2020 which had outlined a set of proposals across five key areas that were designed to help address the barriers many of Manchester's mid to later life residents reported that they faced. This report detailed the progress to date and plans for the next 18 months.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Ageism;
- Care homes;
- Neighbourhoods;
- Employment; and
- Our Manchester.

The Lead Member for Age Friendly Manchester (AFM) outlined how older people had been particularly affected by the pandemic. He also highlighted the positive work that was being done, as detailed in the report, and the need to continue to address these issues.

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

- The condition of pavements and the disproportionate impact of this on older people;
- Digital exclusion among older people;
- The importance of good bus services;
- The specific needs of older LGBT people;
- The role of “Friends of” groups in the Age Friendly parks work;
- Ensuring that the skills development work matched the skills that employers were looking for; and
- The importance of tackling social isolation.

The Age Friendly Programme Lead agreed with the Member’s comment about pavements. He highlighted the age friendly navigation plans which were being piloted in four neighbourhoods and which aimed to identify what routes people took around the neighbourhoods and what enabled and what hindered older people’s access. He advised that the condition of pavements had been highlighted as an issue in one or two of these plans and that this information had been fed back to the Neighbourhoods Directorate. He welcomed the Member’s suggestion of an equalities approach to pavement maintenance and improvement decisions. He suggested that walking and talking with older residents going around their neighbourhood could highlight different issues than officers on their own might identify. He stated that parking on pavements was also an issue and that more work was needed to address this, focusing more on increasing people’s awareness of the problems this caused than on enforcement. The Chair expressed the Committee’s strong support for work to improve the condition of pavements and ensure that they were free from obstructions, such as cars and advertising boards, and for this to be treated as an equalities issue.

The Age Friendly Programme Lead advised that the AFM Board recommended that access to services should not be digital by default, and that non-digital options should be available; however, he informed Members that a lot of work had taken place during lockdown about improving digital access, not just access to devices but also the skills and the confidence to use them and that Libraries had an important role in this.

The Age Friendly Programme Lead informed the Committee about work to influence the Greater Manchester plans for public transport to ensure the inclusion of an age friendly perspective and detailed work taking place around route planning which would assist with trying to get the best deal for older people. The Executive Member for Health and Care supported the Member’s comments about the importance of public transport and emphasised the importance of ensuring that the perspective of older people was represented in the future plans.

In response to the question about LGBT older people, the Age Friendly Programme Lead informed Members about the Pride in Ageing initiative, a representative from which was on the AFM Board, and about the LGBT Extra Care Scheme in Whalley Range. He confirmed that “Friends of” groups were central to work in parks, including being involved in audits, looking at how parks were used.

The Age Friendly Programme Lead advised that a lot of the work outlined in the report, particularly the work within neighbourhoods, was about providing older people

with opportunities to get out and re-connect with people. He informed Members about older people-led organisations which had changed their ways of working since the start of the pandemic to find ways to engage with people who had been remaining in their own home since the start of the pandemic. The Lead Member for AFM advised that social isolation had been an issue for many older people before the pandemic and had been exacerbated by the pandemic and that addressing this was a thread that ran through all the work outlined in the report. He also advised that the voluntary groups referred to played an important role in reaching socially isolated older people but that they did not reach all people, with some parts of the city having better coverage than others, and that some communities of interest were less likely to be in touch with these groups, although they could have their own community groups. He also highlighted the role of Councillors in referring people who were socially isolated to relevant groups.

The Age Friendly Programme Lead informed the Committee about work relating to employment and skills, advising that the Work and Skills Team engaged with employers which gave them an understanding of the skills that were required.

Decision

To note the Committee's strong support for work to improve the condition of pavements and ensure that they are free from obstructions and for this to be treated as an equalities issue.

CESC/21/49 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 an update to the report that came to the Committee in June 2021 for further discussion to enable the Committee to consider further areas within their responsibility where the impact of climate change was of particular relevance and for the Committee to identify areas within its remit it would like to receive more information on and debate further.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Community engagement;
- Culture sector and voluntary sector;
- Libraries' contribution to Climate Change Emergency;
- Leisure and sport; and
- A framework for considering climate change.

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

- The retrofitting of business premises, which was not covered by Government schemes;
- The environmental impact of major events and mitigation measures to reduce this, while also recognising the importance of continuing with events such as the Wythenshawe Games;

- How the Sustainable Events Guide was used and how the Council could use its powers, for example when authorising events or allowing its facilities to be used for them, to influence the sustainability of events organised by external organisations, as well as reducing the carbon footprint of its own events;
- To suggest that Manchester City Football Club be invited to a future meeting to tell the Committee how it was responding to the Climate Emergency;
- Funding made available to improve the environmental impact of the taxi sector;
- How to engage with local communities on climate change, including the role of schools; and
- The importance of good public transport in reducing car use.

The Chair informed Members that Manchester City Football Club had previously delivered a report to the Council, although not to this Committee. He advised that it was useful to hear what partner organisations within the city were doing to address climate change and that he would discuss this with the Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee. Bearing in mind that business premises cut across the remit of other scrutiny committees, the Chair suggested that the Committee could look at the retrofitting and environmental impact of the Council's leisure estate.

The Executive Member for the Environment advised that the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee had recently received a report on the culture sector and events and that she would share this report with the Committee. She also suggested that the Committee could look at ward-based climate change action plans at a future meeting. The Chair advised that he would be speaking to the Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee about this.

Decisions

1. To receive a report on retrofitting and improving the sustainability of the Council's leisure estate.
2. To receive a report on the environmental impact of events and what can be done to minimise this impact.
3. To receive a report on what can be done to make the city's taxi fleet more environmentally sustainable.
4. To recognise that Members need to look at their local climate change action plans and identify what support and resources are needed to achieve these.

CESC/21/50 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.

A Member requested that, when the Committee received a report on a particular

equality strand, that this included consideration of how other equality strands intersected with it. The Chair supported this comment.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme, subject to the above comment.