

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 19 July 2022

Subject: Community Events 2022-23

Report of: Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

Summary

This report summarises the ongoing challenges facing the event sector as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, the subsequent impact on community event remobilisation through the 2022-23 recovery period in Manchester and how the City Council is supporting community event partners to rebuild and reconnect with their communities. The paper outlines the current funding arrangements in place through the Community Event Fund (CEF) and identifies additional areas for development and improvement that are being targeted throughout the 2022-23 financial year to strengthen the capabilities of event partners and reset the baseline against which future funding should be assigned.

Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note and comment on the contents of this report.

Wards Affected: All

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| Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city |
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Recipients of Community Event Funding support must:

- Demonstrate a commitment to implementing a range of sustainable event practices as part of the management of their event in order to support MCC's Carbon reduction target through the adoption of MCC Sustainable Event Guide for Community Events as part of the planning, management and monitoring of sustainable practice
- Work with MCC and partners to support Manchester in accelerating its efforts to encourage all residents, businesses and other stakeholders to take action on climate change

| Our Manchester Strategy outcomes | Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS |
|---|--|
| A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities | Community Events play an important role within the city's growth strategy by attracting investment, raising the profile of the city, creating employment opportunities, and contributing to the city's resident and visitor offer. |
| A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success | Engagement in cultural and community activities enables local residents to learn new skills and participate in creative programmes including volunteering. |
| A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities | Engagement in arts and culture through Community Events enables local residents to improve their health and wellbeing, to develop confidence and resilience and to learn new skills |
| A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work | Community Events provide creative, artistic and heritage opportunities which engage local residents and visitors. |
| A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth | The supported community event organisations increasingly produce digital artistic content to support their activities which support connectivity with other places and extend the reach of their event beyond the local community. |

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Community events in Manchester have played a significant role in promoting community cohesion, social development and showcasing the rich cultural diversity of the city. Furthermore, they provide opportunities to connect people from different backgrounds or to celebrate a community's distinctive cultural identity and promote civic pride.
- 1.2 Manchester's Community Events Programme was largely decimated by the impact of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021. This year provides the opportunity to reset the process of re-engagement with our established community event partners and provide a period of readjustment as they reboot activities and rebuild confidence in a changed operating environment, providing a new foundation to inform future decisions.
- 1.3 City Council funding, advice and event management support have been identified as the key requirements to help stimulate the sector and rebuild the programme, but at the same time it is critical that the City Council provide the development opportunities and toolkits during this period that will enable Community Event partners to understand and respond to key drivers of change in the event sector beyond the recovery period – prioritising how they can support the City Council to influence sectoral change and minimise the carbon footprint of their events, ensuring they are supporting our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and what the implications and application of new legislative frameworks such as Protect Duty will mean to the wider event sector when it comes into force.
- 1.4 This paper provides the context of the current event environment and how events are being aligned with the City Councils covid recovery plan, sets out the funded Community Events programme for the year ahead that will support the sector reboot and identifies additional measures that are being implemented to enable community event partners to be best positioned to respond to the change agenda for the sector and support the City Council in delivering its Climate Change Action Plan and achieving its Equality Objectives related to events.

2.0 UK Events Sector - Post Covid 19 Overview

- 2.1 The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic continues to challenge the UK's Event Sector as we move through 2022. Whilst the initial phase of cultural and economic recovery has stabilised the sector, its ability to fully rebuild continues to be compromised and the process to re-establish the event programme and the operating environment in Manchester will remain challenging in the short to medium term for both professional and community organisers.
- 2.2 Despite the improved outlook on last year, it is projected that 2022 will still be dominated by the legacy impacts of Covid and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the event recovery phase will in all likelihood stretch through to 2025 without stimulus and intervention.

- 2.3 The Business Visits and Events Partnership (BVEP) estimated that the UK event industry had a pre-pandemic value of £70bn - with £38.8bn aligned with the Leisure Sector that defines the core event programme for the City Council (arts, culture and music events, festivals, community events and sports events) - and with the sector effectively closed down from March 2020 to July 2021 there was an 81% downturn in activity resulting in the sector losing £57bn of its value and over 126,000 jobs due to the pandemic.
- 2.4 In 2019, Manchester City Council partnered 55 event organisations to deliver or facilitate 63 events in public space or on our highways attracting more than 1.4 million people across 200 days of live events. The pandemic removed over 90% of that activity from our public spaces and streets. However, the City Council redirected its investment and support in this period so that event organisers:
- Were able to cancel or postpone their events at the right time so that the financial impacts could be managed, and our event partners would still be in place when the restrictions ended.
 - Had the option to move content online or behind closed doors to retain organisational capabilities and ensure that Manchester continued to produce event content.
 - Remained part of a collaborative event planning approach with key partners to retain the ability to reopen activity when permitted.
- 2.5 The first phase post-pandemic Event Recovery Plan for Manchester identified that we needed to help the sector with a measured approach that:
- Provided a viable events programme in the latter part of 2021 that could support the initial recovery period and help kickstart economic and cultural activity in the city,
 - Started to re-engage communities and residents with Manchester's cultural and sporting offer in a measured way and helped to build back public confidence and restore our social fabric by bringing people back together safely through live events.
 - Laid the foundation for the alignment of events with the Phase 2 of recovery from 2022 onward – ensuring that Manchester is best positioned to build on new and existing event partnerships and capitalise on future event opportunities.
- 2.6 As a result, as the Covid 19 restrictions were released in July 2021 the City Council's events partners were supported so that they could drive the initial phase of the cultural and economic recovery through major events. In a 3-month period from July, the Manchester International Festival, Manchester Pride, Manchester Food and Drink Festival, Parklife, Sounds of The City the Great Manchester Run and the Manchester Marathon all showcased the resilience of Manchester's events offer and laid the foundations for the next phase.

- 2.7 Whilst the Tourism Recovery Plan (published June 2021 by DCMS) targets domestic tourism recovery (to 2019 levels) by the end of 2022 and inbound tourism by end 2023, there is a mixed picture emerging from the leisure event sector as it moves through the year into the summer festival period. Audience numbers are returning at established paid ticket events, but a number of new events are struggling to get traction in the marketplace resulting in cancellation after going on sale. Levels of participation in mass sports events remain below 2019 levels and audience numbers at free to attend events currently appear to be behind the curve in many instances.
- 2.8 The commercial event sector is undoubtedly best positioned to capitalise the next phase of recovery and growth for the leisure event sector in Manchester. Over one weekend in June 2022 in excess of 400,000 music fans attended major concerts at Heaton Park (Parklife), the Etihad Stadium (Ed Sheeran), The Emirates Old Trafford (The Killers) and the AO Arena (Alicia Keys), estimated to generate over £28.8m economic impact on the local economy and providing a reminder of the economic value that events bring to the city.
- 2.9 The community event sector, however is not as well positioned to capitalise on the opportunity at the same pace and remains hampered by some key issues that remain across the wider sector:
- The event supply chain and labour pool remain challenged both nationally and locally with demand exceeding supply.
 - Primary funding sources for events remain compromised – with the public sector funding pool oversubscribed and commercial and sponsorship incomes on a slow recovery trajectory.
 - Event organisation costs are currently estimated to be showing a 20-30% increase on pre-pandemic levels.
 - Levels of on-site spend are being impacted by the cost of living and economic inequality impacting on secondary spend returns.
- 2.10 The event recovery context is important in framing this report. The majority of the existing Community Events previously supported are aiming to get re-established in 2022 after a two year hiatus (or with interim online or scaled back activity) however, the challenging environment in which they are continuing to develop their plans means that this year should be viewed as a period of supporting the organising partners to rebuild and reconnect with their communities and set a new baseline from which the City Council can review and reset how we support and invest in Community Events from 2023 onward.

3.0 Manchester: Event Recovery Response

- 3.1 Manchester Events Strategy 2019 – 2029 set out a vision “To be an Eventful City” with a focus over the next decade on developing a diverse, balanced and benefits-driven events portfolio driven by partnerships, which would build on Manchester’s strengths and distinctiveness, contribute to the Our Manchester aim of creating a livable city that is clean, safe and attractive - with improved green spaces and access to world-class sports, leisure and cultural facilities - effectively promote the city as a top tourism and events destination and

position Manchester as an events leader in a global marketplace, whilst ensuring residents benefit from events and are engaged, feeling a strong sense of citizenship and pride in the city.

- 3.2 The Event Strategy identified how we would re-focus our funding to support Events and Festivals, differentiating our investment in events that are aimed principally at supporting community cohesion and animating the city and those aimed at generating significant economic value and profile for the City, with the aim of developing a refreshed, coherent festivals and events offer that provides an authentic connection to the place – inspired by the city and its people and showcasing its living culture.
- 3.3 The vision, principles and aims set out in the Manchester Events Strategy 2019 – 2029 remain intact. In light of the pandemic, how we deliver it now needs to be reviewed and there is a requirement to align our approach with the City's cultural and economic recovery strategy and how we use festivals and events:
 - To help to rebuild local, national and international awareness of, pride in, and engagement with Manchester's culture, leisure and visitor economy
 - To ensure that Manchester continues to offer a vibrant, stimulating environment for people to live, work, study and play by investing in our cultural and leisure offer and providing the platform that will enable the creative and community sector to rebuild at pace.
- 3.4 The initial stabilisation phase through to the end of 2021/22 helped clarify the impact of the pandemic on Manchester's events and festival sector and provided a short-term reactive programme driven by necessity. However, if we are to rebuild, the next phase needs to be defined by how the City Council can provide the leadership to re-energise the event sector, to shape how events and festivals can be used as a tool for the longer-term economic and cultural recovery of the city and to identify how we can leverage sustainable funding mechanisms to support.
- 3.5 The existing strength of our sports facilities and our culture and recreation assets (parks and licensed open spaces, museums and performing arts venues) will be augmented over the next few years with the realisation of investment in the Factory, the Co-Op Live Arena, Mayfield, the redevelopment of Manchester Town Hall and Albert Square, as well as investment commitments to upgrade the National Cycling Centre and Manchester Aquatics Centre and the next phase development of Heaton Park and Wythenshawe Park.
- 3.6 The enhancement of Manchester's cultural and sporting assets aligned to the repurposing of how we will use our city in the future, provides an opportunity to reset the city's events and festivals offer so that it can effectively contribute to maximising the value of these assets and redefining how we want to position and profile the city in the post-pandemic era.

3.7 To achieve this, we must:

- Re-establish the priorities for event investment that will accelerate the economic and cultural recovery through to 2025 and provide a robust platform for future investment.
- Strengthen the integration of events into the cultural, sporting, commercial and community offer of the city to support and sustain jobs and sectoral growth across a range of disciplines and enable other sectors to forward plan and directly and indirectly generate benefit from progressive visitor uptake (hospitality, accommodation, transport etc).
- Redefine how we re-engage with communities on civic and community events and create stronger grassroots resilience across priority sectors that will prepare them better for the future.
- Identify which events will be necessary to sustain our position and promote our existing cultural and sporting assets and the new venues that will come online in the next four years.
- Reset the commercial programme of events to ensure we capture the opportunities to enhance the visitor economy and build sustainable income growth that can support the future development of community activities.

3.8 The approach outlined does not undermine the longer-term ambition of Manchester's Events Strategy. It distils and brings in to focus the key shorter-term priorities and interventions that have been identified that can deliver an effective events sector response post-Covid-19 to support the economic and cultural recovery of the city and provides the parameters against which we should start to develop and assign our future funding streams including for Community Events.

4.0 Community Events Funding 2022/23

4.1 In line with the vision, principles and aims of the Manchester Events Strategy 2019 – 2029, the City Council's investment into events is differentiated between those that are aimed principally at supporting our communities and animating the city and those which generate significant value and profile for the city through the development of the visitor economy.

4.2 The Community Events Funding (CEF) programme is one of three strands of community events facilitated by the City Council and sits alongside Civic Community Events (free to access city animation events such as Manchester Day funded via mainstream revenues and income generation) and Neighbourhood Events (smaller community focused events delivered at a neighbourhood level that may be supported via NIF funds).

4.3 The mainstream revenue budget allocation held annually by the Events Team for the purpose of the CEF Programme is £156,500. In 2022/23 the funding made available has been uplifted to £182,000 through the realignment of other funding opportunities. The allocation to the CEF programme to be delivered in 2022/23 is set out below.

| <u>T1 - Existing Grant Allocations / Assignment:</u> | 2022 /23 Budget Assignment |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| International Women's Day (IWD) | 15,000 |
| Holocaust Memorial Day | 2,000 |
| Community Parades/Processions (incl. St Georges Day Parade, Madonna De Presario Parade, Manchester Pride parade etc) | 25,000 |
| Armed Forces Day | 8,000 |
| | Total £50,000 |

| <u>T1 – Annual Applications (recurring)</u> | 2022 /23 Budget Assignment |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Summer Mela | £17,500 |
| Caribbean Carnival | £20,000 |
| Diwali Mela | £17,500 |
| Irish Festival Parade – subject to application | £17,500 |
| Chinese New Year | £20,000 |
| South Asian Heritage Month | £10,000 |
| Gobe Fest | £10,000 |
| MACFEST | £7,500 |
| Carnival Parade Development (From 2021/22 budget) | £12,000 |
| | Total £132,000 |

4.4 The City Council will continue to provide its year-on-year support to established large scale annual community events as they return to the calendar, providing that each event clearly continues to meet the needs of the target community and provides confidence that it is:

- Set up right to meet the needs of the host community
- Provides assurance that effective practices of governance and transparency are in place; and
- Is following best management practice to meet the demands of safely delivering the event.

4.5 It is recognised that the investment capacity from the Council for community events has been stagnant for over 10 years and further work needs to be undertaken to build this fund in order to meet funding applications from more community groups. Whilst derailed by the impact of the pandemic, the ambition remains to address how the programme can be refreshed year on year and how existing and new funding mechanisms can be targeted to build on the progress made in recent years. The opportunities to be developed further include:

- The generation of income from additional commercial event activities that can be redirected to support Community Events.
- The realignment of other areas of funding to offset pressure on the available Community Events Fund.

- Capacity building with the established community event organisers to improve their ability to attract or develop other sustainable funding streams, reducing the need for the City Council to invest at the same level year on year.

4.6 As the community event sector builds back over the next two years, we will be able to better understand and evaluate the marketplace, test the validity and impact of the different models and set a realistic timeframe for when these funding opportunities should be brought forward.

5.0 Community Events – Strengthening Capabilities

5.1 As the events sector rebuild process takes place over 2022, additional support is being provided to address additional event challenges and to improve the capabilities of community event organisers by strengthening their knowledge base and ensuring that best practice is being incorporated into the reset of the event planning process. Four key areas of focus in the coming 12 months will be Event Sustainability, Protect Duty, Equality and Diversity and effectively measuring and reporting impacts.

6.0 Event Sustainability

6.1 The Climate Change – Events Report submitted to the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee on the 11 January 2022 outlined the progress made to incorporate sustainability into the fabric of the Council's approach to how events are planned and delivered and what future measures the Council can implement to influence sectoral change and further minimise the carbon footprint of these events.

6.2 Events funded by the Community Events Fund (CEF) are required to demonstrate how they will contribute to the Zero Carbon by 2038 target; however, it was recognised that the organisers of community events are often volunteers and therefore can be limited in their capacity. The report identified an additional level of support would be provided via the Events Team through a series of workshops, training events and online webinars for community organisations.

6.3 A pilot programme 'Creating Greener Events' was delivered by A Greener Festival in July covering sources and uses of smarter power, waste management and prevention, eradication of avoidable single use plastics and quick wins in reducing an events carbon footprint and part of the process will be carry out an assessment of each event in the pilot to calculate its individual carbon footprint and recommendations for future improvements.

7.0 Protect Duty

7.1 The pending legislation for Protect Duty will put additional responsibilities on Community Event Organisers to provide better protection from terrorism through a consistent and proportionate process for enhancing security across public spaces and event sites. Whilst counter terrorism measures are already

incorporated into how event sites are managed, once the detail is known the Events Team will review and make sure that community event organisers are aware of their responsibilities and will work with each individual event to ensure that appropriate measures are factored in.

8.0 Equalities and Diversity

- 8.1 The Community Events portfolio contributes directly to Objective 3 of the City Council's approach to Equality - Celebrating Our Diversity - providing an exemplar that we will continue to support and deliver events that promote the achievements and contributions of our diverse communities.
- 8.2 To improve the next step approach to developing and supporting the Community Events Programme we will implement a wider CEF Relevance Assessment that will in turn inform an Equality Impact Assessment to look at key areas related to the management of the event programme to ensure we are identifying best practice in the sector and providing partner organisations with the right information and how we can support them to manage protected characteristics within the event environment.

9.0 Economic and Social Impact Measurement

- 9.1 Pre-pandemic, a number of established economic impact models and calculators had been utilised in Manchester to effectively capture the value of the events programme on the local economy but they do not fully capture and communicate the entirety of the direct and indirect benefits of investment. It is acknowledged that events provide additional direct and indirect impact through participation, skills development, volunteering and a range of other socio-cultural and environmental impacts. Whilst data on these elements is already being captured, the next challenge is to review the new tools that are being developed in the sector so that we can standardise how we analyse and interpret the data, in turn providing an improved knowledge base and range of metrics that can inform future decisions and strengthen the position of the city to justify future investment.
- 9.2 Alongside the event carbon footprint tool identified in the Event Sustainability section above, the Events team will research and bring forward additional toolkit content that can help the City Council and individual event organisers to improve the evaluation of the wider socio-cultural impacts associated with staging community, cultural and sporting events to create strengthened insight that connects back to the impacted community.

10.0 Conclusion

- 10.1 The report recognises that there remains a level of uncertainty around how long and to what ongoing extent the impact of the pandemic will be felt in the event sector and whilst the recovery of commercial events is gathering pace towards pre-Covid levels. The impacts on the remobilised Community Events Sector remain largely unknown at this stage and 2022 should not be the future

benchmark but instead should be used to develop a new baseline that will inform next stage decisions.

- 10.2 Alongside the operational, resource and financial challenges to reboot event activity, there is an acknowledgement that organisers need to strengthen their knowledge base, engage with drivers for change and ensure they are well positioned to meet future requirements related to the impacts of new legislation, how they widen access and participation and incorporate equalities objectives into their approach and how they integrate an effective sustainability programme into their future operations. The City Council has a key leadership role in facilitating that development.
- 10.3 The Committee is asked to note and comment on the contents of the report.