

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2022

Present:

Councillor Hitchen - In the Chair

Councillors Azra Ali, Benham, Chambers, Connolly, M Dar, Evans, Hilal, Hussain, Iqbal, Johnson, Ogunbambo, H Priest, Rawson and Wilson

Also present:

Councillor Midgley, Deputy Leader

Councillor Hacking, Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure

Francess Tagoe, Tree of Life Centre

Mike Wild, Macc

Apologies:

Councillors Whiston and Wills

CESC/22/24 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2022 as a correct record.

CESC/22/25 Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (OMVCS) Fund Refreshed Funding Programme

The Committee received a report of the Director of Policy, Performance and Reform which outlined the engagement and co-design processes that had informed the refresh of the funding programme and provided an initial overview of proposed adaptations. The report also outlined work to review the City's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) support offer, that was running concurrently, which would be an important point of support for the groups supported by this fund from 2023 onwards.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Background to the VCSE sector in Manchester;
- Background to VCSE sector funding;
- Refreshing the OMVCS Fund;
- OMVCS Fund engagement and co-design contributors;
- Outcomes of the engagement and co-design processes;
- Purpose, aims and objectives;
- Principles and eligibility;
- Funding amounts;
- Ways of working;
- Next steps; and
- VCSE support review.

The Deputy Leader expressed her thanks for the valuable work of the VSCE sector during the pandemic.

Fransess Tagoe, the Chief Executive of the Tree of Life Centre, informed Members about her involvement in the co-design process for the refresh of the OMVCS Fund programme. Mike Wild, the Chief Executive of Macc, the support organisation for Manchester's VCSE sector, thanked the Council for continuing to prioritise this in the face of budget pressures. He welcomed the strategic approach to target resources at organisations which were making a real difference in communities and strengthening their ability to respond. He highlighted how core funding from the Council enabled organisations to then draw in additional funding from other sources. He highlighted some of the areas that the refresh hoped to address including a more equitable geographical spread of organisations, greater diversity, particularly in relation to race, and requiring groups which received funding to demonstrate what they were doing to address climate change.

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

- To request a breakdown of the type and size of organisations which were being funded;
- Social groups which had previously been excluded from funding and what was being done to address this;
- The geographical spread of organisations which were receiving funding, noting areas of deprivation;
- Concern that organisations who had been doing valuable work in their communities had previously not been successful in obtaining funding because they did not have the capacity to complete the funding applications as well as some of the larger organisations and that this needed to be mitigated in future funding processes;
- How to support small organisations on how they could contribute to addressing climate change; and
- That it should be a condition of receiving funding that the organisations pay staff the Manchester Living Wage.

The Policy and Programmes Manager reported that his team had a good dataset about the organisations currently being funded and that at the end of the current funding period would be producing a report which contained this information. He advised that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of the previous round of funding applications had identified under-representation in relation to race, as well as organisations in the north of the city. He reported that the work currently taking place was underpinned by an EIA, which covered both the protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010 and broader inequality. He advised that this work would include consideration of the geographical spread, promoting the fund and providing support to VCSE groups equitably. The Chair advised that this work should include consideration of east Manchester, as well as north Manchester. A Member requested that the EIA which had identified the issues in relation to race and north Manchester be circulated to Members of the Committee, to which the Policy and Programmes Manager agreed. A Member commented that the South Asian community was the largest ethnic community in the city and that more needed to be done to ensure fair representation. The Policy and Programmes Manager confirmed

that under-representation in relation to race was acknowledged and that work was taking place to address this.

The Policy and Programmes Manager informed Members that, while all funded organisations would be expected to take action in relation to the climate crisis, the expectations would be proportionate to the size, capability and funds of the organisation, that there would be ongoing support in relation to this and that organisations would be expected to develop and mature their approach over the funding period rather than have a fully developed approach from the start. Mike Wild informed Members that Macc would put together resources for VCS organisations on taking climate action.

In response to Members' comments, Francess Tagoe advised that those involved in the co-design wanted to be remove the perception that this fund was the answer to every funding need of every VCS organisation in the city. She highlighted the issues which arose when organisations collaborated solely for the purpose of getting funding and stated that the Fund wanted to encourage the strengthening of natural links and collaboration between organisations rather than making it a prerequisite of funding.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Policy and Programmes Manager offered to provide further information on the Greater Manchester Health and Wellbeing Partnership Fund at a later date, to which the Chair agreed. In response to a question about the VCSE Support Review, he informed Members that he would be providing a report on this to a Committee meeting later in the year, when more information was available. In response to the Member's comments about the Manchester Living Wage, he reported that this had been raised as a key issue during the co-design process, along with getting organisations to commit to work to address climate change, and that now, in the final stages of the design of the refreshed programme, those involved were looking at how to build these factors into the programme for all organisations.

The Chair thanked the guests for their attendance and for their work.

Decisions

1. To note that the Committee will receive a further report on this work at an appropriate time.
2. To note that the Policy and Programmes Manager will circulate the EIA which identified the issues in relation to race and north Manchester to Committee Members.
3. To note that the Policy and Programmes Manager will provide the Committee with further information on the Greater Manchester Health and Wellbeing Partnership Fund at an appropriate time, when more information is available.

[Councillor Johnson declared a personal interest as, prior to becoming a Councillor, she had run a design business which had worked with VCS organisations, some of which had received funding from the Council.]

[Councillor H Priest declared a personal interest as volunteer for North Manchester FM, which had previously received funding from the Council.]

[Councillor Ogunbambo declared a personal interest as his football club Blackley FC had previously received funding from the Council.]

CESC/22/26 Wynnstay Grove Public Spaces Protection Order - Update

The Committee received a report of the Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety and the Community Safety Lead which provided an update on the implementation of the Wynnstay Grove Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Background information;
- Update regarding the implementation of the PSPO;
- Duration of PSPOs; and
- Review of the Wynnstay Grove PSPO.

A Member who was also a Lead Member for Women advised that she had requested this report after the Roe vs Wade judgement was overturned in the USA. She affirmed the Council's support for women's right to access healthcare to which they were entitled without harassment or intimidation. She welcomed the plans to evaluate the evidence to consider whether the PSPO should be extended and advised that the evaluation should take into account that the pandemic would have affected protest activity during the period of the PSPO. Other Members voiced their support for the PSPO.

A Member reported that the PSPO appeared to have achieved what it set out to do and asked whether, if the evidence supported this, there were alternatives to carrying out consultations every 3 years in order to extend the PSPO. The Community Safety Lead explained that the legislation required that the PSPO be reviewed every 3 years, including carrying out a consultation. In response to a question from the Chair, she confirmed that any impact from the pandemic would be taken into account when reviewing the evidence. In response to a Member's question, she advised that the feedback from the Marie Stopes clinic on the impact of the PSPO had been positive and that there had not been any reports of issues from other providers across the city. In response to a further question on ensuring compliance with the PSPO, the Community Safety Lead advised that, when it was first introduced, engagement had taken place with those outside the clinic and the protest groups involved to ensure that they were aware of the introduction of the PSPO but that now officers relied on the clinic informing them of any breaches of the PSPO which needed to be responded to.

Decision

To note that the Committee would receive an update after the consultation period.

CESC/22/27 Recommendation for the Extension and Variation of the Public Spaces Protection Orders Relating to Dog Control

The Committee received a report of the Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety which provided the Committee with the outcomes of the recent consultation exercise in respect of the PSPOs relating to the control of dogs, which was undertaken between 19 May and 16 June 2022.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Risks associated with poor dog control;
- Legal issues;
- Review of the on-lead/exclusion PSPOs;
- Supporting evidence;
- Consultation;
- Changes to the proposed PSPOs arising from the consultation;
- Equality Impact Assessment and the European Convention on Human Rights;
- Final proposed PSPOs; and
- Next steps.

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

- The enforcement of the restrictions by officers and whether the public could report breaches;
- Public education, the importance of clearly displaying this information in parks and concerns that this was not always the case at all entrances; and
- Was there evidence that the PSPOs had led to a reduction in dog fouling.

The Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety advised that officers undertook patrols and, if there were known issues in a particular area, then targeted enforcement activity would take place. She confirmed that members of the public could report breaches and that reports from the public and Ward Councillors would be taken into account when deciding where targeted enforcement activity was needed. She advised that signage was already in place as the PSPOs relating to dog control had been introduced in 2019. The Compliance and Enforcement Specialist (Environmental Crimes) explained that there was signage at each park entrance and in areas where particular restrictions were in place, such as play areas; however, he took on board Members' concerns that signage needed to be improved and advised that this would be reviewed if the PSPOs were extended. In response to further comments about how dog owners could be made aware of the PSPOs, the Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety advised that all the information was on the Council's website and that dog organisations had been consulted on the PSPOs.

In response to a Member's question, the Compliance and Enforcement Specialist (Environmental Crimes) reported that, if a new area needed to be added to the exclusion order during the term of the PSPO, this could be done as a variation of the order, although there was a process which needed to be followed for this, which included a consultation.

In response to the Member's question about the impact of the existing PSPOs, the Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety reported that she would circulate figures from before the PSPOs had been introduced for comparison. She advised that it could be challenging to catch people failing to pick up after their dogs but that areas which had a particular problem would be targeted and she highlighted that the offence of not being able to demonstrate possession of appropriate means to pick up faeces when in a public place was included in the PSPOs.

In response to questions from the Chair, the Parks Operations Manager advised that she would look into the specific details of the PSPOs in relation to Orford Road Playing Fields, Brookdale Park and Victoria Mill Park outside of the meeting. In response to a further question, the Compliance and Enforcement Specialist (Environmental Crimes) reported that the term "when in use" relating to playing pitches referred to organised practice sessions or matches.

The Chair thanked officers for their work on this and welcomed its implementation.

Decision

To note the report.

CESC/22/28 Community Events

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which summarised 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 was supporting community event partners to rebuild and reconnect with their communities. The paper outlined the current funding arrangements in place through the Community Event Fund (CEF) and identified additional areas for development and improvement that were 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.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Post Covid 19 overview of the UK events sector;
- Manchester's event recovery response;
- Community Events Funding 2022/23;
- Strengthening capabilities relating to community events;
- Event sustainability;
- Protect Duty;
- Equalities and diversity; and
- Economic and social impact measurement.

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

- The success of the Wythenshawe Games, the challenge each year with securing funding for it and that events funding should be provided for the Wythenshawe Games;

- Concern that the same groups were being funded each year and that new groups should be able to access the funding;
- The re-distribution of funds generated by large, commercial events to help fund community events;
- To recognise the important role of volunteers in running events and concern that there were lower volunteer numbers after lockdown; and
- The impact of the Protect Duty.

The Events Lead reported that the Council would like to increase its community events budget and that one way of doing this would be to bring more commercial activities into a park such as Wythenshawe Park and then use that money to fund other local, community activities. He advised that the Council would also like to reduce the amount of funding provided to existing partners but that this had been impacted by the pandemic. He reported that the Wythenshawe Games did not submit a funding application in the current year so could not have been considered and that he was aware that it had been funded through other routes previously; however, if an application was submitted in the future, it would be considered against the criteria. In response to a question from the Chair, he advised that the criteria was published when the funding was advertised and applications were evaluated against that but that the applications for funding normally outstripped the amount of funding available. The Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure reported that he would discuss with officers how to ensure that the publicity about the funding scheme was shared with different groups.

The Chair requested that the Committee receive a further report at an appropriate time which included the criteria for funding, the Manchester Events Strategy and an update on work on the additional areas for development and improvement which were referred to in the report. The Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure offered to circulate the criteria for the fund to Members of the Committee. Members requested that the timetable for the scheme and the Equality Impact Assessment also be circulated. In response to a Member's question on the sports programme across the city, the Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure agreed to circulate information on sports activities that were being funded across the city. In response to a Member's question about event sustainability, he referred Members to a report on Climate Change and Events which had been submitted to the Committee's meeting on 11 January 2022 and asked the Scrutiny Support Officer to circulate this to the Committee Members. The Commercial Lead outlined some of the work taking place to improve sustainability and advised that information on the impact of this would be included in the next report.

The Events Lead acknowledged the Member's comments about volunteers, stating that the number of volunteers had decreased but that, as many events had not taken place yet, the extent of this impact was not yet known. In response to a Member's request, he advised that information on the geographic spread of the funded events could be included in the next report. He reported that the Protect Duty was forthcoming legislation which would put additional responsibilities on community event organisers to provide better protection from terrorism. In response to a question from the Chair, he advised that this was likely to lead to increased security costs for event organisers but that, as the legislation was not published yet, this could not be confirmed.

Decisions

1. To receive a further report at an appropriate time which includes the Manchester Events Strategy, information on the geographic spread of the funded events and an update on work on the additional areas for development and improvement referred to in the report.
2. To request that the Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure circulate the criteria and timetable for the Community Events Fund, along with the Equality Impact Assessment and information on sports activities that are currently being funded across the city.
3. To ask the Scrutiny Support Officer to circulate the report on Climate Change and Events, which was considered at the Committee's meeting on 11 January 2022, to Members of the Committee.

CESC/22/29 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.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme.