

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2022

Present:

Councillor Hitchen - In the Chair
Councillors Benham, M Dar, Evans, Hilal, Hussain, Iqbal, Ogunbambo, H Priest, Rawson, Whiston, Wills and Wilson

Also present:

Councillor Midgley, Deputy Leader
Councillor Rahman, Statutory Deputy Leader
Councillor Hacking, Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure
Councillor Lynch, Lead Member for Women
Rebecca Livesey, MCRactive
Yawar Abbas, MCRactive
Chief Superintendent Rob Cousen, Greater Manchester Police (GMP)
Chief Inspector Adam Wignall, GMP
Andrew Roberts, Probation Service
Stuart Tasker, Probation Service
Spencer Davies, The University of Manchester
Superintendent Chris Downey, GMP
Phil Hoyland, City of Manchester Learning Partnership

Apologies:

Councillors Azra Ali, Chambers, Connolly and Johnson

CESC/22/30 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2022 as a correct record.

CESC/22/31 Minute's Silence – Pakistan Floods

The Committee held a minute's silence for the people affected by the floods in Pakistan. A Member informed the Committee about work taking place in Manchester to support those affected, including containers of items donated by Manchester residents which would be shipped to those affected. He reported that the Leader had met with the Consul General of Pakistan and MP Afzal Khan to discuss what other support Manchester could provide.

CESC/22/32 Manchester Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Update and Proposed Refresh

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which highlighted the progress that had been made to date in delivering Manchester's Sport and Physical Strategy and the amendments that were proposed to ensure the city remained on target to deliver a sustained increase in participation levels and how the city built back fairer from the impacts of the virus. The Committee was invited to

comment on this report before its submission to the Executive on 14 September 2022.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Progress on the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy in relation to the seven strategic themes;
- Refresh of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy to 2028; and
- Next steps.

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

- To welcome the shift to recognising the need for different approaches for different places and communities;
- The cost of living rise and the affordability of leisure activities, including what could be done for young people who could not afford to pay for leisure activities;
- That the most important element of the strategy was to encourage people who were currently inactive to start becoming active;
- Noting the importance of free sports activity and the ability to try a sport for free and that upgrading of sport facilities should not involve the introduction of a small fee for using them as that would deter people from trying out these activities;
- The installation of non-turf cricket wickets in parks and the need for the activation programme so that they were used;
- To welcome the Active Streets programme but could any follow-up work be done to continue to engage the residents;
- Concern that some areas did not have adequate sports facilities as having to travel to facilities was a deterrent to taking part;
- The importance of women-only activities to encourage increased participation;
- To request an increased equality focus in future reports, including recognition of invisible disabilities;
- To welcome that the report had differentiated between leisure facility membership and usage in terms of gender and that it would be useful to have this breakdown for the other equality categories; and
- That it would be useful to have more data on the progress made in relation to usage by people from Black, Asian, and other Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

Rebecca Livesey, Chief Operating Officer of MCRactive, informed the Committee about work to understand communities better and work differently, highlighting the Sport England Greater Manchester Local Pilot and the Winning Hearts and Minds programme. She advised that the funding for these would end in 2024 and that plans were already being discussed for how the lessons learnt would be used beyond this date to work differently, embedding them in a neighbourhoods delivery model. She reported that the programmes had a focus on people who were currently inactive and getting them to become engaged in some level of activity and that this included engagement with women, different ethnic minority groups and age groups. She provided an example of a women's cycling group aimed at women who had not learnt

to ride a bicycle when younger and advised that there were many other examples and Members could contact her for further information.

The Commercial Lead (Neighbourhoods) outlined changes that had been made to leisure facilities to make them more accessible for disabled people. She advised that this had so far not resulted in the expected level of increase in use by disabled residents so further work was needed, consulting with relevant groups to find out what kind of leisure sessions they wanted. She acknowledged the cost of living crisis affecting Manchester residents, including children and young people, and reported that the Council and its partners were responding with an increase in free, accessible facilities, including localised, targeted provision. In response to a Member's comments, she advised that more work would be done to improve communication, including non-digital communication, so that residents were aware of what was available in their area. In response to the comments about the equality data in the report, she advised that she would provide the additional data requested to Committee Members. She reported that more women-only sessions were being provided, although there had been challenges in recruiting female lifeguards in some areas which they were working to address.

Yawar Abbas, Head of Sport and Events, MCRactive advised that he and his colleagues were happy to meet with individual Members to discuss the issues they had raised, including activities for young people and the follow-up to Active Streets. He acknowledged the Member's point about introducing charges for facilities, saying that this was a complex issue as the provision had to be sustainable. He outlined how this was being achieved in relation to tennis and also highlighted the Holiday Activity Fund, which was targeting free provision where it was most needed. Rebecca Livesey drew Members' attention to the free swimming offer for those aged 16 and under and those aged 60 and over. Yawar Abbas advised that the launch of the activation programme for the non-turf cricket wickets was due to take place the following day.

Decisions

1. To request a further report including place-based activity across the wards, comparison of different areas of the city, coaching opportunities, the impact of the cost-of-living rise, work to engage people with different protected characteristics, including women, and providing activities to engage young people.
2. To note that the Commercial Lead (Neighbourhoods) will provide the data requested.
3. To endorse the recommendation to the Executive that:
 - (1) The Executive is recommended to approve the refresh of the Strategy.

CESC/22/33 Community Safety Strategy 2022-25

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) and Chair of the Community Safety Partnership which introduced the Community Safety

Strategy 2022-25 for Manchester and highlighted the Community Safety Partnership's priorities for the next three years.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- The legislative context of the Strategy;
- Consultation with residents, businesses and community groups;
- Other factors taken into account in developing the Strategy;
- The Greater Manchester Police and Crime Plan 2022-25; and
- Community Safety Partnership Priorities and a summary of some of the actions that would be carried out to meet these priorities.

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

- Preventing re-offending, including the impact of mental health issues, drugs and alcohol and issues relating to housing, skills and employment and what more could be done, noting that some drug and alcohol services had been closed down;
- Residents' concerns about anti-social behaviour, burglaries and speeding, noting that, while GMP's response to burglaries seemed to have improved, residents still did not feel that there was enough action in response to speeding;
- Residents' perception that it was difficult to report crimes to GMP;
- The need for innovative and holistic collaborations to address some of the issues in communities;
- Sharing positive experiences of specific neighbourhood police officers in Members' wards; and
- Young people, noting that they could often be the victims of crime or be perpetrators, including ensuring that their views were taken into account, improving the relationship between young people and the police and responding to issues relating to the behaviour of some young people directly after the end of the school day.

Stuart Tasker from the Probation Service advised that acquisitive crime was now central to the Integrated Offender Management strategy and that the Probation Service, GMP and drug services were working together to address the underlying causes of offending. He informed Members about his service's tailored approach for working with young offenders between the ages of 18 and 25.

The Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) outlined work taking place with GMP and health partners through the Bringing Services Together programme to identify where high levels of demand for their services were coming from and putting together joint plans for particular individuals.

Chief Superintendent Rob Cousen from GMP informed the Committee that GMP had made a commitment to visit every victim of burglary and that the level achieved at present was about 94%. He advised that GMP had a focus on neighbourhood crime including burglary, robbery, vehicle crime and theft from the person. He advised he had established three neighbourhood crime teams in Manchester to focus on these areas. He outlined work taking place to address speeding, advising that more speed

watch operations would be taking place and that GMP was also encouraging community speed watch. He asked Members to inform GMP of areas where this was a particular issue of concern. He informed Members of improvements in the reporting of crime, advising that the average length of time for a 999 call to be answered was now 9 seconds and for the non-emergency 101 number it was now one to one-and-a-half minutes, a reduction from 5 minutes. In response to a question from the Chair, he confirmed that the key priority areas outlined in the Police and Crime Plan were all of equal priority.

Chief Inspector Adam Wignall from GMP informed the Committee about work taking place with partners, including the business community, to address crimes such as theft from the person related to the night time economy, including a focus on prevention.

The Statutory Deputy Leader welcomed the approach of the new Chief Constable Stephen Watson and Chief Superintendent Rob Cousen, which focussed on neighbourhood policing, while also highlighting the challenges faced by the city, due to austerity and funding cuts, both in GMP and in areas such as drug and alcohol services, and he advised that, therefore, an innovative approach was required.

Chief Superintendent Rob Cousen reported that GMP's School Engagement Officers were working with the city's young people and that there was also other engagement work with young people, for example, sports activity to build trust and confidence with young people. He reported that neighbourhood police officers had previously been used to respond to emergency incidents but that they would now be ringfenced for neighbourhood policing work, patrolling in the local area and addressing local concerns, such as anti-social behaviour, before they developed into larger issues.

The Community Safety Lead informed the Committee that, although there had been cuts to drug and alcohol services over a long period, there had recently been some investment in this area and this had been linked in with the Bringing Services Together work and adopting a trauma-informed approach. She reported that the Community Safety Partnership was working with Manchester Metropolitan University who were carrying out a regular survey to understand the trends and prevalence of drugs in communities. In response to comments about young people and crime, she drew Members' attention to a piece of work commissioned through Reclaim, which had been used to inform this Strategy and the Serious Violence Strategy. She outlined the partnership approach to addressing anti-social behaviour and preventing its escalation.

In response to a question from the Chair about designing the physical environment to reduce crime, including street lighting and the use of alleygating, the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) offered to provide a further report which included information on this. She advised that Community Safety Specialists were involved in the design of new neighbourhoods and had been involved in the re-design of Piccadilly Gardens. She reported that alleygating was part of Public Space Protection Orders and advised that further information on this could be included in a future report. A Member requested that a future report include further information from the Probation Service on preventing re-offending, including addressing mental health issues, drugs and alcohol issues and housing, skills and employment. The

Chair requested that information on hotspot areas where people on probation were housed be included in a future report. She also requested that a future report include information on links with the youth service.

Decision

To receive a further report at an appropriate time, including the information requested by Members.

CESC/22/34 Manchester's approach to achieving the Safety of Women and Girls

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which introduced Manchester's approach for the safety of women and girls in the city.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- The Greater Manchester response;
- Manchester's approach;
- White Ribbon Accreditation; and
- Governance.

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

- That some of this work should focus on older women and the issues they face;
- To welcome the Women's Night-time Safety Charter and could this be incorporated into Licensing Policy;
- The need to tackle violence against trans women; and
- Attacks on new female students in September in wards such Fallowfield and Withington.

Spencer Davies, Head of Advice and Response at the University of Manchester outlined how the University was working with partners to respond to the issues relating to the Safety of Women and Girls. He highlighted the recently established Sexual Violence Action Network for students, and improved information-sharing between universities to identify patterns and trends and provide a targeted response. He outlined the role of the University's Advice and Response Team, which included supporting female students in relation to domestic abuse and sexual assault and other violence.

The Lead Member for Women welcomed that the Council had been awarded White Ribbon Accreditation and advised that the Council should encourage other organisations to do the same. She welcomed the progress in addressing the spiking of drinks. She advised that there should be a focus on prevention, including educating men and boys.

The Community Safety Lead confirmed that colleagues from Education were part of the steering group and that work in schools would form part of this work. She advised that there were a lot of crosscutting themes within this work. She reported that the Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy had included a focus on older

women and that work was taking place to address the gap in provision in relation to this group. She assured Members that older women not been forgotten as part of the work on the Safety of Women and Girls and that she would ensure that this was reflected in the Equality Impact Assessment and the Reference Group. She confirmed that her team were working with Licensing colleagues in relation to the Women's Night-time Safety Charter and standards for licensed premises. She acknowledged the Member's point about trans women and that the safety of trans women needed to be part of this work. In response to a Member's question about the women's groups involved in this work, she stated that she would welcome Members' suggestions of any other groups who could be involved. She stated that there was a comprehensive plan in place for the return of students in September.

In response to a Member's suggestion that a subgroup be established with female Members only to look at the different areas and issues within this work, the Chair advised that she would discuss this proposal with the Deputy Leader and then provide an update to the Committee.

The Chair welcomed that the Council had been awarded White Ribbon Accreditation and recommended that all male Councillors undertake the White Ribbon training.

Decision

To recommend that all male Councillors undertake the White Ribbon training.

CESC/22/35 Serious Violence Draft Strategy

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which provided an overview of progress made on developing Manchester's Serious Violence Strategy. The draft strategy explained the strategic partnership approach to serious violence for Manchester.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Background information;
- The Serious Violence Duty; and
- Manchester's approach – key priorities and principles for delivery.

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

- How would the success of the Strategy be measured and could the Committee receive regular information on this;
- Examples of violence and anti-social behaviour from young people in some wards and concerns of this escalating without intervention;
- That more needed to be done to get children out of Pupil Referral Units back into mainstream schools and provide support to parents; and
- Issues of disproportionality in the criminal justice system affecting the level of trust young people had in the police and other authorities which could prevent them from seeking support.

The Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) advised that the Committee received a regular update report on Community Safety priorities so officers could look to incorporate data relating to this strategy.

The Community Safety Lead advised that there were a range of outcomes which would be measured, for example, crime statistics, school inclusion, first time entrants to the criminal justice system and support provided to young people, and that young people had been consulted on the outcomes that should be measured. She agreed with a Member's comment about the importance of involving families affected by serious violence in the work taking place and acknowledged issues of disproportionately in the criminal justice system, particularly in relation to black young men and people with Special Educational Needs and Disability, which were recognised within the Strategy.

The Head of Youth Justice informed the Committee that additional funding from the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit and the Community Safety Partnership was enabling his service to use the trusted relationship model, which had previously been used to work with and build relationships with young people who had entered the criminal justice system, to work with young people who had not entered the criminal justice system, providing specialist intervention at an earlier stage.

In response to a Member's question, Phil Hoyland, Partnership Development Lead, City of Manchester Learning Partnership provided further information on the SAFE Taskforce, highlighting work to identify and work with children struggling with the transition from primary school to high school.

The Chair requested that the Committee receive a further report, including information on measuring the outcomes of the Strategy. She requested that the report also include information on work to tackle the increase in youth violence in north Manchester and disparities across different areas of the city.

Decision

To request a further report, including information on measuring the outcomes of the Strategy, work to tackle the increase in youth violence in north Manchester and disparities across different areas of the city.

CESC/22/36 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.