

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2022

Present:

Councillor Hitchen - In the Chair

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

Also present:

Councillor Midgley, Deputy Leader

Councillor Rahman, Statutory Deputy Leader

Councillor Igbon, Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods

Councillor White, Executive Member for Housing and Development

Councillor Wheeler, Ward Councillor for Piccadilly

Chief Inspector Adam Wignall, Greater Manchester Police (GMP)

Apologies:

Councillors Iqbal and Whiston

CESC/22/48 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2022 as a correct record.

CESC/22/49 Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (OMVCS) Fund

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided an update on the process that had been followed to refresh the OMVCS funding programme for 2023-26. The report described the steps that had been taken, as well as providing an overview of the applications received and the current position. The Committee was given an indication on next steps and timescales for decisions.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Background to the VCSE sector in Manchester;
- Summary of the OMVCS Fund and the refresh process;
- Progress update July – December 2022;
- Overview of applications received; and
- Next steps.

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

- What would happen after the decisions were taken, in particular support for organisations which had submitted an application but had not been successful;

- The geographical spread of applications and what work was taking place to ensure different communities across the city were being served;
- Concern that smaller organisations were at a disadvantage in their ability to submit bids and the importance of supporting smaller organisations with submitting grant applications; and
- Future funding opportunities for organisations which were not successful.

The Assistant Chief Executive highlighted the support, outlined in the report, provided to organisations in submitting applications for the fund. He advised that, due to the high number of applications, not all could be funded and that the infrastructure support provider would provide support to the organisations which were not successful. He reported that a wide range of organisations, covering the different areas of the city, had applied to the fund. He recognised that some areas of the city had historically had an under-representation of VCSE organisations. He highlighted paragraph 4.16 in the report, which outlined how the Panel would proportionately target areas of under-representation across neighbourhoods and communities of identity. In response to a question from the Chair, he highlighted that 69% of the proposals submitted aimed to tackle poverty. He reported that a lot of bids had been received from very small organisations, with 81 bids in the small grant category, and that significant work had been done to engage with these organisations. In response to a question about VCSE groups working to address climate change, he advised that it was a condition of receiving the funding that organisations had to have a plan for addressing climate change. He supported a Member's comment about the importance of collaboration between VCSE organisations, stating that collaborative working was a criteria within the funding process. He reported that small voluntary organisations were supported by the infrastructure provider and neighbourhood officers in their ward.

In response to a Member's question, the Policy and Programmes Manager (Communities and VCSE) clarified that, although organisations applying for the fund could be based outside the city boundaries, they needed to demonstrate a strong Manchester connection over at least 18 months. He reported that all the organisations which had applied to the fund, both those which were successful and those which were unsuccessful, would receive strengths-based feedback on their application, including information on how they could improve their application in future, and that the infrastructure provider would provide ongoing support. He advised that there were alternative sources of funding which unsuccessful applicants could be signposted to. He informed Members that the panel had receiving training on conscious and unconscious bias, with the aim of ensuring that applications were considered based on what the organisation was proposing to do, rather than on how well-written the application was, as the latter tended to lead to already successful organisations continuing to receive the funding. In response to a Member's question, he advised that a diverse panel had been recruited and that an Equality Impact Assessment had been developed throughout the process.

The Chair recognised the important role of volunteers and thanked all volunteers in the city for their work, asking officer to pass on thanks to the voluntary organisations.

Decision

To request that information on which organisations are successful and alternative sources of funding for unsuccessful organisations be included in a future report.

[Councillor Hussain declared a disclosable pecuniary interest as a Director of Muslim Writers North which had submitted a bid for the fund and left the room for this item.]

[Councillor H Priest declared a personal interest as a volunteer at North Manchester FM which had submitted a bid for the fund.]

[Councillor Ogunbambo declared a personal interest as the Chair of Blackley Football Club of Manchester]

[Councillor M Dar declared a personal interest in relation to Youth on Solid Ground and Keep Youth Work Alive Beswick.]

CESC/22/50 Public Open Spaces CCTV

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhood Services) which detailed the policy and procedure developed following the review of Public Open Space CCTV. It detailed how the Council would ensure that the significant investment in CCTV was targeted effectively in the city whilst ensuring compliance with the Information Commissioners Office Code of Practice for surveillance cameras. The Committee was invited to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Executive on 14 December 2022.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Background information;
- Investment in CCTV;
- CCTV Board;
- Policy and procedure for CCTV legitimacy and effectiveness;
- Additional cameras; and
- Legal advice.

The Statutory Deputy Leader reported that the Council was committed to investing in upgrading its CCTV equipment and placing cameras in the right locations where they were most effective.

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

- Cameras that could be deployed across the city to address areas that were subjected to sustained fly-tipping;
- Had a data protection impact assessment been carried out and, if so, could Committee Members see it;
- The process relating to proposals to site cameras in new locations, including how Ward Councillors would be involved in this and whether residents could be involved too;
- The concentration of CCTV cameras in the city centre, asking that consideration be given to placing more cameras in other parts of the city and ensuring that their location was spread fairly across the city;

- To request a breakdown of how many CCTV cameras were located in the city centre and how many were in other areas and how many were used to address crime and disorder as opposed to fly-tipping;
- Was a full review being carried out of the location of all CCTV cameras across Manchester; and
- The capacity of the CCTV control room if additional cameras were installed in future.

The Director of Commercial and Operations clarified that mobile cameras, operated by the Compliance and Enforcement team, were used to tackle flytipping and that additional funding had been provided for these from the Growth and Waste funding in the budget.

The Community Safety Lead advised that the Council had a data protection impact assessment for CCTV cameras which was currently being updated and that she could share the existing one. She advised that proposals for the location of cameras would be discussed at a ward level, facilitated by the neighbourhood teams, with Ward Councillors being able to discuss where they had concerns and thought that cameras would be a good solution for a crime problem; however, she advised that the views of the local police and neighbourhood teams would also be taken into account so it could be decided that it was not appropriate to place a camera in a particular location or that there were other ways to resolve the problem. She advised that consideration would be given to how residents could feed into this. She reported that cameras would be located where there was the greatest need, including consideration of the crime statistics and other provision in the area. She stated that she could provide Members with the breakdown of the location of cameras between the city centre and neighbourhood areas. She confirmed that the fly-tipping cameras were not included with the scope of the report. She confirmed that a full review of the location of CCTV cameras would take place and that their location would be continuously reviewed to ensure compliance with the legislation.

The Director of Commercial and Operations advised that decisions on the distribution of cameras would be evidence-based, identifying where they were most needed, rather than an equal spread across the city, and that this was what was required legislatively. In response to a Member's question about changes in technology, he reported that the new cameras would primarily perform the key function of observing what was taking place and feeding it back to the control room and that there were no current plans relating to the use of artificial intelligence. He reported that there was physically space in the CCTV control room to monitor more cameras but it could require more operatives to monitor them, which would be an additional cost. He also advised that the location and capacity of the control room was due to be reviewed.

Chief Inspector Adam Wignall from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) reported that, where there were concerns about crime in a particular location but it did not meet the requirements for installing a CCTV camera, other measures would be put in place to tackle the problem and he outlined some of the work taking place to reduce crime and disorder, including the establishment of prevention hubs and work with the Community Safety Partnership and local communities to solve problems in local areas. In response to a question from the Chair about GMP's budget for CCTV cameras, noting that they had previously invested in cameras in Moss Side which

were now obsolete, he advised that he would need to look into this. He reported that GMP had recently installed cameras in Piccadilly Gardens, with assistance from the Community Safety Partnership.

The Community Safety Lead reported that Safer Streets funding had been used to fill some of the gaps in areas of Moss Side and Rusholme which required CCTV coverage. In response to a question from the Chair about the future replacement of cameras as they reached the end of their lifespan, she reported that replacing the 169 cameras that were over 7 years old would make a significant difference but confirmed that there would be a rolling maintenance programme.

Decisions

1. To receive the further information that Members have asked for at an appropriate time, including in relation to control room capacity, plans to manage the replacement of other cameras as they reach the end of their lifespan and GMP funding for CCTV cameras.
2. To endorse the recommendation to the Executive that:

The Executive is recommended to:-

Approve the Policy and Procedure for legitimacy and effectiveness of CCTV in the city.

CESC/22/51 Compliance and Enforcement Services - Performance in 2021/22

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhood Services) which provided an update on demand for and performance of the Compliance and Enforcement service during 2021/22. The report also provided a forward look at challenges and future workload pressures as a result of changes to legislation, policy and areas of growth that would have an impact on the work carried out by Compliance and Enforcement teams.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Background information;
- Demand;
- Proactive activities;
- Programmed activities;
- Formal enforcement action;
- Ongoing challenges; and
- Future challenges/pressures.

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

- That enforcement activity and prosecutions in relation to fly-tipping should be publicised to assure residents that action was being taken and to warn fly-tippers of the consequences of their actions;

- Issues with poor bin management by students;
- What work was being done to tackle landlords who were letting properties which were not fit for habitation;
- To what extent could the future challenges and pressures outlined in the report be met and what were the risks associated with these;
- How could local businesses better liaise with the Compliance Team so that they did not fall foul of the regulations; and
- Concerns that jobs were sometimes being recorded as completed on the CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system when this was not the case.

The Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety advised that the Council used social media to publicise action taken in relation to fly-tipping and issued press releases when they had successful fly-tipping prosecutions; however, she advised that they were dependent on the media picking up on the press releases. She advised that they had previously worked with the Manchester Evening News on advertorials and could look into this again. She reported that she was also open to Members' suggestions for other ways this work could be publicised. She advised that the Council did a lot of work to engage with students, as well as engaging with landlords, and that enforcement action was taken where appropriate. She advised that there were no enforcement powers in relation to taking wheelie bins back onto properties promptly, although the pavement should not be obstructed and she would ask officers to look into this issue. In response to a Member's question about street signage, she advised that most legislation did not require this. She reported that Manchester was working to target rogue landlords, including the use of selective licensing and providing information to tenants and landlords on the actions they could take to address and report mould. In response to a Member's question, she offered to provide a copy of the relevant leaflets. The Executive Member for Housing and Development outlined work to address damp and mould in both private rented and social housing, including making it easier for tenants to report issues.

The Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods outlined how the Neighbourhood Teams, other Council services and partners organisations, including the universities and Manchester Student Homes, were working together to address the issues raised in relation to areas with a large student population. She reported that this was a constant battle and that they were continually working to address this, as well as looking for new approaches which could be taken. She advised that a further response would be provided to the Member who had raised this in relation to the next steps to address this within his ward of Withington and that she would be happy to discuss this further with him. She agreed that it would be useful to further publicise the positive work which was taking place and that this could be done through the Ward Co-ordination Officers.

In response to the question about future challenges, the Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety reported that the service would need to prioritise resources, stating that the service currently did a lot of work above and beyond the statutory role but that, where necessary, the statutory work would need to be prioritised, and the additional work reduced, focusing on the work which was most needed. She advised that, when the government brought in new legislation, there should be funding made available and that her service was always looking for sources of funding and bidding for it. In response to the question about work with

local businesses, she advised that the Compliance Service's initial approach was always to help businesses to comply with regulations, although enforcement was used where businesses were not willing to engage. In response to a Member's question about reporting fly-tipping, she advised that people could still report this by telephone as an alternative to using the website but that a lot of fly-tipping was identified through pro-active work. In response to a Member's question, she advised that she was not aware of an increase in noise complaints due to pavement licensing. She asked Members to feed back on any instances where jobs had been recorded as completed on the CRM system when this was not the case.

The Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods informed Members that a new CRM system was being introduced. In response to a question from the Chair, the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) advised that, although this fell with the remit of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee as an ICT issue, he would liaise with the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer about providing an update on this work for this Committee.

In response to a question about the Council's regulatory duties in relation to industrial processes, the Strategic Lead (Compliance and Enforcement) reported that visits were carried out twice a year and that the focus was on education to ensure that they were operating correctly.

The Chair thanked staff in this area for their work, recognising the wide range of work they undertook.

Decisions

1. To request that the Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety circulate the leaflets in relation to damp and mould to all Members of the Committee.
2. To request that the Committee receive an update on plans for the new CRM system.

CESC/22/52 Community Safety Update

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhood Services) which provided an update on the range of work delivered to address the priorities in the strategy and included updates on the City Centre and Wynnstay Grove Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs). It also included information on how partners worked to help people feel safe in the city centre, including the role of Licensing, taxi marshals, pubwatch and event security.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Tackling neighbourhood crime and antisocial behaviour;
- Keeping children and young people safe;
- Tackling serious harm and violence;
- Tackling drug and alcohol driven crime; and
- Protecting communities through changing offender behaviour.

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

- To recognise the positive, multi-agency work taking place in the Withington and Ladybarn area to tackle anti-social behaviour;
- Plans to expand training, for example on Martyn's Law, to licensed premises outside of the city centre; and
- To request more information on the Complex Safeguarding Hub, including what the thresholds were for referral to the Complex Safeguarding Hub, what percentage of referrals were not dealt with through the Hub because they did not meet this threshold and how Manchester's threshold compared to other Greater Manchester authorities.

The Chair informed Members that the Chair of the Licensing Committee was unable to attend this meeting but had asked for his thanks to be passed on to the Licensing Team, GMP, partner organisations and the Scrutiny Committee for their work to keep residents and visitors to Manchester safe.

The Community Safety Lead reported that, if a referral was not appropriate for the Complex Safeguarding Hub, this did not mean that they would not receive support and that a range of other support could be offered, with a focus on early intervention. She stated that she would ask colleagues in Children's Services to provide further information in relation to the Member's questions on the Complex Safeguarding Hub. She informed Members that the Complex Safeguarding Hubs across Greater Manchester were in contact with each other to understand how other Hubs across the region were working and to share good practice. In response to a Member's question about PSPOs, she reported that the PSPO in relation to street drinking was in place across the city, not just the city centre, although it was not a blanket ban on street drinking and was used to tackle anti-social behaviour. She advised that begging was not covered by any of the PSPOs currently in place in the city but that there was a well-established approach to begging, focused on getting people the right help and support, and that this approach was used across the city.

The Principal Licensing Officer advised that the training referred to would be expanded to the district centres next year. In response to a question from the Chair, he confirmed that the multi-agency partnership was city-wide and routinely considered issues outside of the city centre.

The Ward Councillor for Piccadilly Ward requested confirmation that none of the five Fixed Penalty Notices which had been issued in relation to the City Centre PSPO had been issued to people who were genuinely homeless. The Community Safety Lead confirmed that none of these had been issued to homeless people.

The Statutory Deputy Leader highlighted how partners were working together to make communities safer and the importance of this multi-agency, collaborative approach, particularly in the light of reduced resources.

The Chair thanked everyone for their work and recommended that the Statutory Deputy Leader write to the Secretary of State to highlight the importance of adequate funding to do this work. The Statutory Deputy Leader agreed that he would write to

the Secretary of State and circulate a copy of the letter to all Members of the Committee.

Decisions

1. To note that the Statutory Deputy Leader will write to the Secretary of State to highlight the importance of adequate funding to do this work and will circulate a copy of the letter to all Members of the Committee.
2. To note that the Community Safety Lead will liaise with Children's Services to provide the Member with a response to her questions about the Complex Safeguarding Hub.
3. To request that Members be kept informed of the training taking place regarding Martyn's Law and ACT (Action Counter Terrorism) training.

CESC/22/53 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.

In response to a question about the Z-Arts grant, it was agreed that information on cultural grants should be incorporated into the Libraries, Galleries, Culture and Leisure Annual Report scheduled for the Committee's February meeting.

Decision

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