

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 18 July 2023

Present:

Councillor Hitchen (Chair) – in the Chair

Councillors Azra Ali, Doswell, Good, Ogunbambo, H Priest, Rawson, Sheikh, Whiston and Wills

Also present:

Councillor Hacking, Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure

Councillor Igbon, Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods

Councillor T Robinson, Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care

Councillor Davies, Lead Member for Age Friendly

Elaine Unegbu, Chair of the Age Friendly Manchester Older People's Board

CESC/23/30 Minutes

Decision: That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 20 June 2023, be approved as a correct record.

CESC/23/31 Age Friendly Manchester Refreshed Strategy 2023-2028

The committee considered a report of the Director of Public Health and the Age Friendly Manchester Programme Lead which described how the new Age Friendly Strategy Manchester: A City for Life 2023– 28 built on previous progress, provided a series of responses to the ongoing impact felt by some older people to the pandemic and the struggles faced by the cost-of-living crisis for many people aged over 50 and outlined a series of priorities and commitments to drive better outcomes.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background;
- Key statistics around age, population, life expectancy and unemployment amongst over 50s;
- How the refreshed Strategy was developed;
- How the refreshed Strategy aligned with the Council's priorities and other key strategies;
- The themes of the refreshed Strategy:
 - Being heard and age equity;
 - Age friendly neighbourhoods where we can all age in peace;
 - Age friendly services which will support us to age well; and
 - Work and money
- An initial 18-month delivery plan was being developed; and
- How progress would be monitored.

Key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussion included:

- Welcoming the refresh;
- Expressing concern that not all complexities and intersectionalities experienced by older people were reflected in the report;
- The different experiences and challenges faced by 50-year-olds and 80-year-olds;
- The need for more flexibility with regards to rightsizing;
- That the impact on Age Friendly should be included in all committee reports;
- The experiences of older people in the LGBTQ+ community;
- Requesting further information on the delivery plan;
- Requesting background information on the disproportionate effects of age on different groups;
- Querying what activities and services were provided for older people in each ward;
- How the work of the Strategy linked with the Council's Highways service to improve existing highways, public spaces and access;
- What was being done to help older people with the cost-of-living crisis;
- Whether all libraries were accessible by bus;
- Whether increased public toilet provisions would be included in the delivery plan; and
- Requesting further information on the findings of the research undertaken by Manchester University in collaboration with Age Friendly Manchester on the impacts of the pandemic on older people living in areas of multiple deprivation.

The Programme Lead – Age Friendly Manchester explained that the refreshed Strategy provided the vision for the next five years with four key themes. He stated that extensive consultation with older people had been undertaken and built on the progress made over the past 20 years. He stated that the Strategy provided practical responses to the lived experience of older people, such as the cost-of-living crisis and the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care stated that communities were defined by their older people and thanked officers for their work on this and residents for their involvement and engagement. He also wished to place on record his thanks to former Councillor Eddy Newman who had driven this work in his former role as Lead Member for Age Friendly Manchester.

The Chair of the Age Friendly Manchester Older People's Board explained that she had been involved in the Board for 18 years and highlighted the work undertaken by the Council and the Board. She noted that there was more work to be done, particularly around employment, access and the cost-of-living crisis.

The Lead Member for Age Friendly Manchester highlighted Manchester's Age Friendly approach and that this work was ongoing, highly consultative among a range of groups, and would be continuously developed.

In response to a point raised regarding the need to reflect the different experiences between age groups, the Programme Lead – Age Friendly Manchester acknowledged the different experiences felt by a 50-year-old and an 80-year-old. He stated that there were 3 different age categories, for those up to state pension age, for 66- to 80-year-olds and for over 80s. He stated that the delivery plan included different responses to different age ranges and circumstances. He stated that highlights of the delivery plan could be shared with the committee once developed.

The Programme Lead – Age Friendly Manchester acknowledged difficulties in finding suitable housing provisions for older people but explained that the approach of Age Friendly Manchester was to provide a range of options to suit everyone, noting that social care was not suitable for all older people. Members were advised that the Council was hoping to develop an LGBT-affirmative extra-care scheme in Whalley Range. He also explained that the Council currently works with housing providers to have dynamic and supportive conversations with tenants to best meet their needs.

Further to this, members were informed that the Council worked with Pride in Ageing, which was a foundation-led initiative of LGBTQ+ people working in Manchester to share and promote their lived experiences and to inform foundations such as Pride in Practice. The Programme Lead – Age Friendly Manchester stated that the Council was examining how this work could also be shared within the care sector and that a representative of Pride in Ageing was included in the membership of the Older People's Board.

In response to a recommendation to include an Age Friendly Impact Assessment in all committee reports, the Programme Lead – Age Friendly Manchester stated that this was something he and his team were eager to implement and would provide value to reports. It was highlighted that age was a protected characteristic which was included in the overall Equality Impact Assessment.

The Programme Lead – Age Friendly Manchester explained that work was ongoing to develop the delivery plan with key partners. It was anticipated that a final draft would be available in September for launch in autumn and this could be provided to the committee.

Members were informed that the State of Ageing report would provide detail on the breadths of experiences of older people and would provide a baseline for monitoring progress over the Strategy's lifespan.

In response to a member's query on work with the Highways service, the Programme Lead - Age Friendly Manchester stated that there were examples of success in changing bus routes as a result of lobbying, for example the rerouting of a bus service in Old Moat and Fallowfield to improve access for residents. He acknowledged that this was challenging to do on a wider scale, but it was hoped that the greater powers over public transport awarded by the devolution trailblazer for Greater Manchester would enable the GM Ageing Hub to have greater influence in shaping such decisions and structural changes to bus routes.

It was stated that information on cost-of-living support needed to be clear and accessible to older people. The Programme Lead – Age Friendly Manchester emphasised that a ‘digital by default’ approach was not encouraged, and that face-to-face dialogue and printed information was available. He stated that libraries were vital in providing these services and a free, biannual newsletter would be relaunched and available from libraries, supermarkets and community centres to share information on the cost-of-living support available.

Members were advised that all libraries within Manchester were of an Age Friendly service standard.

In response to a query regarding whether increased public toilet provisions would be included in the delivery plan, the Programme Lead – Age Friendly Manchester explained that there were opportunities to improve provisions through developments and the use of Equality Impact Assessments. He advised of the ‘Take a Seat’ campaign, which worked with cafes and other facilities to provide free access to toilets and acknowledged that this campaign needed to be rolled out into more neighbourhoods.

The committee was informed that the delivery plan was being developed by those involved in its implementation and that most of these were external partners.

In summarising, the Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care stated that he wanted to raise the work of Age Friendly further up the political agenda. He explained that the Strategy would be considered by the Senior Management Team, the Executive Strategy Group and Full Council and thanked the committee for their comments.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member and officers for their attendance and thanked the Chair of the Age Friendly Manchester Older People’s Board for her 17 years’ service to the Board.

Decision:

That the committee

1. notes the report;
2. requests that the delivery plan be provided to a future meeting for consideration; and
3. recommends that Age Friendly be promoted in the Equality Impact Assessments of all committee reports.

CESC/23/32 Community Events 2023/24

The committee considered a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which provided a context for the current operating environment for events and how the

ongoing development of the events programme continues to align with the City Council's Events Strategy. It provided additional insight on the Community Events programme and updates on the progress made against previously identified areas of development and improvement to support community events.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background to the Manchester Events Strategy;
- The event programme for 2023;
- The Community Events Fund (CEF) Programme, and the challenges faced by this;
- The funding and geographic spread of the Community Events Programme;
- The eligibility criteria for Community Events Funding;
- Confirmation that bonfire and firework events would not be reinstated going forward;
- How sustainability was considered at events funded by the CEF; and
- Work would be undertaken with the Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion team to progress to identify how the staging of events can potentially impact on people with protected characteristics who are beyond the event footprint and may fall outside of the direct responsibility of the event organiser.

Key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussions included:

- Welcoming the Council's support of community events;
- Requesting clarification on a number of events listed in the report which received CEF funding but did not appear to meet the criteria for such funding;
- How external businesses and traders attending events are encouraged to comply with the Council's commitment to reducing single-use plastics;
- The need to strengthen sustainability requirements for events, noting that there is no requirement to acknowledge the Sustainability Check when booking Council-owned land for events;
- Whether there would be a public awareness campaign on upcoming legislation to ban retailers, takeaways, food vendors and the hospitality industry providing single-use cutlery, plates and bowls;
- How the geographic spread of events within the city could be improved;
- What events will be included in the programme of autumn and winter activities to replace bonfire displays;
- How income generated by events benefits local communities;
- The need to hold more free events and to diversify the locations where these events are held;
- Why Pride events were included within the report, given that major events fall under the remit of the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee;
- What local events are delivered in individual neighbourhoods; and
- How many events received CEF funding recurrently and whether this impacted the ability for new events to benefit from this funding.

The Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure explained that the Council's Events Strategy was adopted in 2019 and acknowledged the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis on events across the city. He stated that this had changed the types of and opportunities for events taking place in Manchester and the capacity and venue offers in the city.

The Head of Events Development explained that 13 of the events listed within the report were funded by CEF with the remainder funded or facilitated through other mechanisms. He stated that a separate list of all events funded by CEF could be provided to members, which would demonstrate how these events met the criteria for CEF funding.

Members were advised that the use of the term 'citywide' when referring to primary event location within the report related to where attendees were drawn from. The Head of Events Development highlighted that certain major events were held in one location, such as a park, but attendees would travel from across and beyond the city to attend.

In response to queries around sustainability and single-use plastics, the Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods stated that a citywide licensing consultation was currently underway with a specific section on sustainability and members would have sight of this before being considered by the Executive. She also explained that a refresh of the Parks Strategy was being undertaken and would examine how the Council acted sustainably and how events were run in line with this.

The Parks Lead highlighted that it was often easier for large-scale commercial events to reduce the use of single-use plastics and cited the Christmas Markets as an example of this and highlighted that Parklife Festival was trialling a cup return scheme. It was hoped that trialling such schemes and measures within large events would create guidance around best practice which could be shared with smaller organisations and community groups.

It was also explained that event bookers would be asked the detail their considerations of sustainability measures from 2024.

In response to the Chair's query regarding whether there would be a public awareness campaign on upcoming legislation to single-use items within the hospitality sector, the Parks Lead stated that marketing and educational material was still awaited from the government. She advised that early engagement work had been undertaken with businesses across the city to advise them of changes.

The Director of Neighbourhood Delivery recognised that local groups were hosting events across the city regularly which the Council was unaware of and that the Council wanted to support these groups to ensure that events were safe, regardless of their scale. He stated that the Council would be happy to provide advice to any group holding an event.

The Parks Lead advised that local engagement had been undertaken to ensure a winter programme of events and activities that reflected what communities wanted. She explained that a range of activities and events were held in 2022 across all parks which previously held bonfire displays. It was agreed that further detail on this would be provided in a future report.

The committee was advised that the Council had a long-standing history of commercial and community events taking place in parks and this had been a theme in the Parks Strategy launched in 2017. The Parks Lead explained that parks were subsidised through investment from the Council but there remained a need to generate income for maintenance. She stated that revenue from events was used to reduce the gap between income and expenditure and also helped to ensure the quality of parks. It was also stated that the Council was looking at investment plans at a number of sites, including Platt Fields, to promote future opportunities for investment.

The Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods acknowledged members' points regarding the need for more free events and to diversify the location of these across the city. She noted that access to infrastructure can be a challenge in smaller parks but noted that it was a key consideration in the refresh of the Parks Strategy.

It was clarified that the Events team fund the Manchester Pride Parade and not events within the Gay Village. This funding was used to support road closures and the overall operation of the Parade, which was felt to be justified as a free-to-access element of the Pride weekend.

The Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure explained that larger events had a significant economic impact and so, fell under the remit of the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee whilst the delivery and operational elements of events formed part of the Council's Events Strategy.

In response to a query from the Chair regarding CEF-funded events which took place across local communities/neighbourhoods and whether these were spread evenly across all 32 wards, the Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods explained that any events which were held in parks fell under the remit of Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee and stated that an update on these kinds of events would be included in the next Parks Strategy report to that committee.

Detail on the number of recurring events in receipt of CEF funding would be provided outside of the meeting.

The Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) advised that reports on major events were considered by the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee due to their economic impact on the city, whereas smaller events were within the remit of this committee due to their impact on and benefits for communities. He noted that there was a limited amount of CEF funding and that more targeted work was needed to identify the scale and demographics of attendees. It was stated that there were lots of

neighbourhood-based events which the Council was not involved in and there were no central funding schemes available for these. He provided assurances that the Events and Neighbourhoods teams would continue to explore ways to increase investment opportunities for neighbourhood events.

Decision:

That the committee

1. notes the report;
2. requests further information on all CEF-funded events, including how these meet the criteria for funding, their reach and location, and whether these are recurring events;
3. requests that a further report be provided in 6 months; and
4. requests that information on the geographical reach of events be provided for each event included in future reports.

CESC/23/33 Overview Report

The committee considered a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which 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.

Members requested that the work programme for September's meeting be amended to provide a more detailed scope on the Communities of Identity report and to request that information on how the Council engaged with the student population to promote and ensure their safety be provided in the Community Safety Strategy report. These requests would be relayed to officers.

A query was also raised regarding the date of the first meeting of the committee's Task and Finish Group on crime and antisocial behaviour. Members were advised in response that the Committee Officer would email them outside of the meeting for their availability and that the first meeting would be held in September.

Decision:

That the report be noted, and the work programme agreed.