

Communities and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2007

Present:

Councillor Flanagan - In the Chair
Councillors Ankers, Bracegirdle, Carroll, Hall, Karney, Lewis, McCulley, N. Murphy, Risby and Royle.

Also Present:

Councillor Amesbury – Assistant Executive Member for Arts and Leisure
Councillor Eddie Newman – Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Swannick - Executive Member for the Environment.
Katy Stewart – Manchester Pride
Jackie Crozier – Manchester Pride
David Martin – Community Arts North-West
Michael Withington – Manchester Italian Association
Anton Xavier – Ludgate Residents/Didsbury
Chris Peterson – St Georges Day
Tom Sogbetun – Friends of Crumpsall
Thelma McGrail – St Georges Day
Esther David – Irish Festival
Roy Walters – Caribbean Carnival of Manchester
Sonia Stewart – Caribbean Carnival of Manchester
Sue Golpys – African Festival UK
Pedro Da Silva Vicente - African Festival UK

CN/07/32 Urgent Business

The Chair reported that he agreed to a report on the Local Development Framework being submitted for consideration as urgent business.

Decision

To agree to consider the report as urgent business in order to allow the Committee to consider the issues raised prior to decision by the Executive on 21st November and to allow consultation to proceed on the Issues and Options paper in accordance with the proposed timetable.

CN/07/33 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th of October 2007 as a correct record.

CN/07/34 Community Events

The Chair welcomed representatives from the community to the meeting and said he was looking forward to discussion with them, in which members could explore how the Council's present policies towards community events were working and how these could be developed in the future.

Representatives from a mix of local and citywide events were present, some funded and some not, and their views would help the Committee consider how best it could put forward proposals, which responded to the needs of all the different groups across the city.

As a means of taking things forward, the community representatives and Councillors broke up into smaller groups to discuss issues and bring forward suggestions for consideration for the full Committee.

Suggestions brought back from the groups included:

- Increased financial support beyond cash grants
- More support from the police
- Less red tape from the Council
- Support in principle for a joint Manchester event or festival emphasising the variety of communities in Manchester, whilst maintaining individual identities
- A focus on involving children and young people
- Support for the establishment of a Forum/Resource Base to discuss issues of mutual concern and enable the pooling of resources and ideas, which individual groups could tap into
- Better timetabling of funding, which was often late and unhelpful to groups trying to make prior arrangements
- Development of an events calendar for the city, which would encompass all events taking place
- More support from the Council on organisational problems and the removal of restrictions on the distribution of literature
- The running of workshops to assist groups in grant applications and different sources of funding
- The provision of simple work or office space to help smaller groups in the administration and management of their events.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Arts and Leisure) said that she would be happy to look at the establishment of a joint forum and at ways of supporting groups, including through access to databases and sharing of experience and knowledge. She would also be pleased to help facilitate workshops around funding applications and related issues.

In discussion Members welcomed the ideas, which had been put forward and expressed their full support for the establishment of some form of joint forum and pooled resource base, through which groups could share their experiences and provide mutual support. There was also strong support for a joint festival/event as a celebration of Manchester and its different communities.

The Assistant Executive Member (Arts and Leisure) said that he would be pleased to get involved in discussions around this and supported the overall approach. It was agreed that a Sub Group should be set up to explore in greater detail the issues raised and bring back proposals for consideration to the Committee.

Decision

To set up a Sub Group of Members (names to be nominated to the Chair) to look in further detail at arrangements for support to community events, including the establishment of a joint forum and shared data/resource base and a joint Manchester event/festival which would involve all communities across the city.

CN/07/35 Trading Standards

Members considered a report on the work of Trading Standards and the way in which the service was delivered across the range of activities, in which it was involved.

It was explained that the team worked in close liaison with the police, particularly in relation to action against counterfeit goods and cigarettes and had a high success rate in this area.

Action was also taken against licensees where it was known that illegal trading was taking place in licensed premises. Members were asked to let the team know of any premises they knew where this was happening.

Members thanked their officers for the presentation and for all the hard work being done by the team on behalf of the residents of the city.

Decision

To welcome the report.

CN/07/36 Local Development Framework

A report was submitted on the approach to the Issues and Options stage of preparing the Local Development Framework Core Strategy on Site Specific Allocations Development Plan document.

Decision

To endorse proposals as put forward.

CN/07/37 Climate Change

Officers from the Green City team attended the meeting and gave presentations on the potential impact of climate change and action that could be taken by the Council and individual residents.

Members expressed concern about the fact that the use of bio-fuels by the Council could affect the warranties on its vehicles and asked whether anything could be done

to get round this using the Council's purchasing power. It was explained that a pilot scheme was taking place involving Ford and it was hoped to be able to report back next June or July on how this could be taken forward across the city.

There was a detailed discussion on food policy and concerns were raised that in some areas of the city there were virtual food deserts, with no retail food outlets. Also the cost of organic food and food from farmers' markets could be expensive for a lot of Manchester residents. Action which had been done using schemes for the delivery of food boxes was outlined as was the close work with Food Futures on promoting healthy diets.

It was noted that there was increasing take up of allotments throughout the city and members were keen to encourage this.

Reference was made to the possible distribution of standby switches. It was explained that use of technologies had been looked at as part of the last 100 Days and experiences learnt through this were being examined to see how they could be rolled out.

There were concerns about the impact of the airport on climate change and whether the airport was meeting its targets. It was explained that the airport had now published its Master Plan to 2030, which set out a series of challenging targets and it was agreed that it would be useful to meet representatives of the airport to discuss this further.

Questions were raised in relation to water usage and the potential for imposing conditions on developers and to help restrict runoff caused by tarmacing gardens and drives.

There was also discussion of the pilot scheme in Chorlton on the use of plastic bags. It was agreed that it would be helpful to look at this to see how good practice could be used as a basis for extending into other parts of the city.

Decision

To request further papers back to the Committee looking specifically at issues:

- a) In connection with the development of the airport
- b) In relation to food, including further encouragement of allotments and the problem of food retail "deserts"
- c) Problems caused by water runoff
- d) The pilot study on plastic bag use in Chorlton.

CN/07/38 Information and overview report

Members considered the November overview and information report. The Chair reported that he had been discussing arrangements for the Sub Group on Affordable Housing with the relevant Executive Members. In addition to the Chair, Councillors Longsdon, Karney, and Royle had indicated an interest in being involved and it was agreed that other names should be e-mailed to the Chair.

Decision

To note the report.

CN/07/39 Graham Wood

Members noted that Graham Wood was retiring from the Council in early December and placed on record their appreciation for his services to the Committee.