

Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel

7 September 2021

Commenced: 6.00pm

Terminated: 7.55pm

Present: Councillors Glover (Chair), Mills (Deputy Chair), Billington, Bowerman, Chadwick, Choksi, J Fitzpatrick, A Holland, Jones, Lewis, Patel.

Apologies: Councillors Cartey, Gosling, North, Robinson, T Sharif.

13. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel held on 27 July 2021 were approved as a correct record.

14. TAMESIDE CULTURAL OFFER AND STRATEGY

The Panel welcomed Councillor Leanne Feeley, Executive Member, Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage; Emma Varnam, Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods; and Marie Holland, Arts and Engagement Manager, to receive an update regarding the Council's cultural offer and strategy.

Members received an overview of a broad range of cultural events and activities that took place pre-covid, with detail of participation and engagement with residents and communities across the borough. This included:

- Whit Friday Brass Band Contest
- Tameside Armed Forces Day
- Tameside Remembrance Services and Parades
- Lantern Parade
- Christmas Events

The Panel heard that Covid-19 and subsequent lockdowns has required Cultural Services to plan and work differently, this includes the ongoing need to harness and embrace technology, to explore new opportunities and ensure the local offer remains attractive and accessible. The service has set itself ambitious targets to continue delivering a broad programme of work that has primarily involved new virtual events and self-led activities. Examples such as the online themed 'Culturecrafts' and family theatre online show success in generating interest and reach across Tameside.

A breakdown was provided on the range and scale of cultural grants received during recent years. Grants can be specific to a project or initiative, which highlights the importance of external funding opportunities. It is also important for the local strategy to align with regional priorities.

Tameside will aim to support and build upon the known and emerging cultural clusters. The next step is to start building a cultural framework through research and conversations. Initial findings are to be drawn up by the end of February 2022 and the final proposal will be completed by the end of March 2022 to coincide with the Arts Council England funding deadline.

Councillor Feeley and officers responded to a number of questions from the Panel on:

- The cultural framework, strategic priorities, planned consultation and timescales.
- Future delivery of cultural services, including a hybrid model and continued use of technology

- to support suitable projects.
- Key developments and priorities for 2022.
 - How the cultural offer can connect with ambitions of the Council specific to that of economic recovery and town centres.
 - Community engagement to inform the programme of work.
 - The importance and accessibility of grants and external funding within the new framework.

Resolved: That Councillor Feeley and officers be thanked for attending the meeting.

15. BUDGET UPDATE

The Panel welcomed Councillor Oliver Ryan, Executive Member, Finance and Economic Growth; and Caroline Barlow, Assistant Director of Finance, to receive an update on the 2021/22 budget and looking ahead.

Members received a comprehensive in-year budget appraisal that included an overview of financial impacts and projections related to Covid-19 as well as current financial pressures placed on a range of statutory services.

Members agreed with the key risk factors and emerging pressures. In response to the update, a letter of the Scrutiny Chairs will be sent to Councillor Ryan to take account of discussions captured at the meetings and subsequent feedback received.

Resolved: That Councillor Ryan and Ms Barlow be thanked for attending the meeting.

16. PERFORMANCE SCORECARD

The Panel received the Corporate Plan Scorecard for information.

17. GREATER MANCHESTER SCRUTINY

The Chair provided a verbal update on activity of the GM Housing, Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

18. CHAIRS UPDATE

The Chair informed panel members of a working group meeting that will take place on 18 October 2021 to review the Council's Asset Management Framework and Policy.

Scrutiny training is available for members that are new to the panel since 2018. The session will take place on 4 October 2021 and delivered by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS). Content will focus primarily of key principles, impacts and supporting members to gain specific skills in aspects such as effective preparation and questioning.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel will take place on Tuesday 2 November 2021.

20. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

CHAIR