

## **Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2016**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Reid – in the Chair

Councillors Sameem Ali, Hewitson, Midgley [CYP/16/16 - CYP/16/23], Madeleine Monaghan [CYP/16/18 - CYP/16/25], Reeves, K Simcock and Stone

#### Co-opted Voting Members:

Ms E Holt, Parent governor representative

Mrs B Kellner, Representative of the Diocese of Manchester

#### Co-opted Non Voting Members:

Mr L Duffy, Secondary sector teacher representative

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Culture and Leisure

Councillor S Newman, Executive Member for Children's Services

Councillor Bridges, Assistant Executive Member for Children's Services

Ashley McCormick, European Youth Capital 2019 Leaders Panel

Michelle, European Youth Capital 2019 Leaders Panel

Emmanuella, European Youth Capital 2019 Leaders Panel

#### **Apologies:**

Councillors Shaukat Ali and Taylor

Ms J Gudgeon, Primary sector teacher representative

Ms L Leonard, Representative of the Diocese of Salford

Mr A Muse, Parent governor representative

### **CYP/16/16                      Minutes**

#### **Decisions**

1. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2016.
2. To receive the minutes of the Ofsted Subgroup meeting held on 14 June 2016.

### **CYP/16/17                      Elective Home Education (EHE)**

A member noted that, since the Committee considered Elective Home Education (EHE) at its 21 June meeting, there had been media coverage of a report published on EHE, following the death of a child in Wales. She requested that the Committee receive an update on how the Council safeguards children who are home educated. The Director of Education and Skills recommended that this also include information on Children Missing from Education (CME), to which the Chair agreed.

#### **Decision**

To receive an update on the safeguarding of children who are home educated and Children Missing from Education in a future report.

## **CYP/16/18                      European Youth Capital 2019**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education and Skills which provided an overview of Manchester's bid to be European Youth Capital (EYC) 2019 and a summary of the opportunities that this presented for the city and its young residents. The Committee welcomed three members of the European Youth Capital 2019 Leaders Panel, set up by the Manchester Youth Council, Ashley, Michelle and Emmanuella.

The Executive Member for Culture and Leisure reported that this represented an opportunity to further the youth agenda and to consolidate the city's European identity. He noted that the majority of Manchester voters had voted 'Remain' in the recent referendum on European Union (EU) membership and that young people in particular had been strongly in favour of remaining in the EU. He expressed his support for the British Youth Council's campaign for 16 year olds to be allowed to vote.

The EYC 2019 Project Manager provided an overview of the current bid and Manchester's previous bid to be the European Youth Capital. She advised members that the outcome of the EU referendum did not affect Manchester's eligibility as the EYC was run by the Council of Europe, not the EU. Emmanuella provided an overview of the three themes for Manchester's 2019 bid – Changing the City, Challenging the status quo and Celebrating Diversity. Ashley reported that they were engaging with a range of organisations to build support for the bid. Michelle reported that they were also promoting engagement across Greater Manchester and the north west, including having two members of the Youth Forum North West on the EYC Leaders Panel.

Members welcomed this work. A member reported that Manchester was well-known for music and sport and asked whether this was incorporated into the bid. The EYC 2019 Project Manager reported that the Manchester United Foundation and the Contact Theatre were involved and they were interested in exploring how Manchester's music scene could be incorporated into this work.

In response to a member's question, Ashley informed members that anyone under 30 was classified as 'youth' for the purposes of the EYC. The Committee discussed how all young people could be engaged in this work, noting that not all young people were in education.

In response to a member's question, Ashley reported that becoming EYC would bring development opportunities for young people in Manchester in the lead up to, during and after 2019, including internships and apprenticeships.

### **Decision**

To thank the guests for attending, to support the bid and to request that the guests inform members if there is any assistance they can offer.

## **CYP/16/19    Residential Review**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which provided information on the findings from a review of residential care for children and young people and proposed a modernised delivery model. The Head of Fostering and Adoption provided an overview of the report which proposed closures of Acorns and Seymour Residential Children's Homes and to convert the Manchester Emergency Team (MET) provision into an Adolescent Support Unit and re-locate it to premises in Ardwick. The Committee was invited to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Executive on 27 July.

The Executive Member for Children's Services advised members that this was the best course of action as the current arrangements were not working. She reported that too many young people were entering care over the age of 11 and being placed in children's homes, which was not achieving positive outcomes. She reported that the Adolescent Support Unit would work with the whole family to prevent young people from becoming Looked After and that, if young people did need to become Looked After, they would be placed in foster care, where possible.

In response to members' questions, the Head of Fostering and Adoption reported that parents would retain parental responsibility for young people in the Adolescent Support Unit and a strength-based model would be used to empower and support them in parenting the young person. He reported that, where a young person was primarily living at home, there was less opportunity to be negatively influenced by the behaviour of other young people. He reported that a number of other local authorities had established Adolescent Support Units and the evidence showed that these had improved outcomes for the young people.

Members recognised the work of staff within Manchester's children's homes and the difficult nature of their job. The Executive Member for Children's Services reported that these proposals were not a reflection on the staff working in these homes but recognition that the current arrangements did not achieve the best outcomes for the young people. A member reported that he had expressed concerns previously that up to six young people with complex, challenging behaviour were being accommodated together. Another member emphasised the importance of consultation with and appropriate planning for the young people in the homes which it was proposed to close.

In response to a member's question, the Head of Fostering and Adoption reported that residential homes currently had two waking night staff and one sleep-in member of staff and that it was proposed to reduce this to one member of waking night staff and one sleep-in member of staff.

The Chair noted that a number of staff would be affected by the proposals and expressed concern that some staff were in the Council's M People process, without a substantive post, for too long. She informed members that she would raise this through the HR Subgroup.

The Chair supported the recommendation to close Acorns and Seymour Residential Homes, emphasising the importance of the homes being closed safely and linking this work with other strategies. She welcomed the proposal to establish an

Adolescent Support Unit. She noted some of the issues with older children entering the Looked After system, including the number who went Missing From Home, and reported that an Adolescent Support Unit would provide short term respite and enable more young people to remain with their families and not enter the Looked After system.

## **Decision**

To endorse the recommendations that the Executive:

- Authorise consultation on the proposed closures of Acorn and Seymour Residential Children's Homes
- Authorise the consultation on the proposal to convert the Manchester Emergency Team provisions into an Adolescent Support Unit.
- Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Children's Services, to consider the outcome of the consultation and determine whether to proceed to implement the proposed closures of Acorns and Seymour Residential Children's home and the conversion of the MET provision into an Adolescent Support Unit

[Councillor Stone declared a personal interest as a Regulation 44 visitor to Seymour and Acorns Residential Homes.]

[Councillors Reeves and S Newman declared a personal interest as Regulation 44 visitors to Acorns Residential Home.]

[Councillor Reid declared a personal interest as a Regulation 44 visitor to Willow Vue Residential Home.]

## **CYP/16/20            Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Part 1 Development of additional SEN provision: proposal to expand Rodney House Special School**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education and Skills which proposed to change the location, designated age range and number of places available at Rodney House Special School. This would increase the number of primary special school places by 20.

The Director of Education and Skills provided an overview of the proposals. He advised members that this report differed slightly from the report which was being submitted to the Executive for its 27 July meeting. He explained that this was because the consultation on the proposals had closed after the publication date for the reports for Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. Therefore, the report to the Committee had included information on consultation responses up to the date of publication. He advised members that the report to the Executive would include all responses for the whole consultation period but that no further responses had been received since the report to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee had been published. He further advised that the report to Executive had included recommendations to progress with the prescribed alterations to the school.

Members welcomed the proposals. The Executive Member for Children's Services reported that these changes were needed due to increased demand for places. She

advised that expanding the age range to cover the full primary phase was beneficial for the children as it avoided an additional transition between schools.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Head of Education Strategy, Access and Inclusion reported that the school's new premises would be refurbished and was in a good location, as children in that area had not previously had a local primary specialist support school and the school would be close to and able to develop better links with Melland High School.

## **Decision**

To support the proposals outlined in the report.

### **CYP/16/21           Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Part 2 Development of additional SEN provision at Broad Oak Primary School**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education and Skills which outlined a proposed alteration to Broad Oak Primary School to increase the number of specialist places for children with social, emotional and mental health needs. The Director of Education and Skills provided an overview of the proposals and members were invited to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Executive on 27 July.

Members welcomed the report. In response to a member's question, the Head of Education Strategy, Access and Inclusion informed the Committee that the Council had delivered all the specialist places within its current plan but was now starting work on a new three-year plan, considering projections for future need.

Members discussed parking issues around schools. The Chair reported that this was an issue for many schools and that a common approach was needed. The Director of Education and Skills advised that the proposals for Broad Oak Primary School would not have a significant impact on parking issues around the school, as only a small number of additional children would be admitted to the school. He also informed members that Broad Oak Primary School was taking action to address parking issues around the school.

The Executive Member for Children's Services reported that funding for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), including special schools and specialist resource provision, came from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. She expressed concern that this budget had not increased since 2011 while the school population in Manchester had increased significantly. A number of members agreed to lobby on this issue. The Director of Education and Skills informed members that the funding arrangements for the Dedicated Schools Grant and the High Needs Block component were being reviewed by the Department for Education. He advised members that the second phase of consultation on this had not yet taken place and, at this stage, it was not possible to project the implications for Manchester schools.

## **Decision**

To endorse the recommendation to the Executive that:

Executive is asked to note the report and:

- Agree to making a prescribed alteration to Broad Oak Primary School to designate the school as resourced mainstream provision for children with social, emotional and mental health needs;

### **CYP/16/22                      Local Government Association (LGA) Care Practice Diagnostic**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Lead for Children's Social Care which provided an overview of the Local Government Association's Care Practice Diagnostic and outlined the resultant action plan. The Strategic Director of Children's Services introduced the report.

The Executive Member for Children's Services reported that a number of improvements had been made since the LGA Peer Review has taken place. She informed members that improvements had been made to governance arrangements, safeguarding training had been arranged for members and, following a reminder of their corporate parenting responsibilities, more members were attending the Corporate Parenting Panel meetings.

The Chair commented that a lot of progress had been made within the last three months, including the additional investment in social workers. She reported that, while attendance at Corporate Parenting Panel meetings had improved, more work was needed to improve this further. She noted that the review had found that the scrutiny committee requires some development but expressed concern that there was no further detail provided on this. A member commented that it would have been useful to have the information and evidence of progress since the LGA review included in the report.

### **Decision**

To note the report.

### **CYP/16/23                      Post Ofsted Improvement Plan Update: Early Help**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which provided a progress update on developments within early help. The Strategic Head of Early Help introduced the report across its broad themes.

Members welcomed the report and the progress made. The Committee discussed schools' engagement on Early Help and how schools could be encouraged to engage. The Strategic Head of Early Help informed members about her team's engagement with and support for schools. She reported that she met regularly with the Early Help Reference Group, a group of head teachers from primary, secondary and special schools, to strategically plan and progress the Early Help agenda in schools, incorporating schools' feedback and priorities. She advised that, on a locality level, her team had been promoting engagement with schools and testing out peer-to-peer support, as it was recognised that this was key in encouraging other

schools to engage. She reported that practical support, for example, on processes, was also important and that schools had a named Early Help practitioner who could provide them with practical support and guidance. She informed members that the number of Early Help assessments was increasing on a monthly basis but acknowledged that more work was needed, particularly with secondary schools, and that this was going to be an area of focus for her team.

A member reported that safeguarding was a priority for high schools. However, he advised that it was important that a member of the senior leadership team within the school was the lead for safeguarding and that this was not always the case.

The Chair requested information on any resistance from individual schools. A member recommended that schools which were positively engaging with Early Help be promoted as an example to others, reporting that this would encourage other schools to become involved. The Chair noted the importance of secondary schools engaging with Early Help and requested that the Director of Education and Skills raise this issue with secondary school head teachers.

In response to a member's question, the Strategic Head of Early Help provided an overview of the approach to supporting young carers. In response to a question from the Chair, she reported that the Early Help Hubs were used as a base office but provided help across an area of the city. She also provided information on the involvement of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Early Help and informed the Committee that a VCS Strategic Lead partner would be working with her team two days a week to further promote the involvement of the VCS in this work. The Chair welcomed the involvement of the VCS.

## **Decisions**

1. To note the report.
2. To welcome the involvement of the Voluntary and Community sector in this work.
3. To recognise the importance of secondary schools engaging with Early Help and to ask the Director of Education and Skills to raise this with secondary school headteachers.
4. To request that information on any resistance from individual schools be circulated to members and to request that schools which are positively engaging with Early Help be promoted as an example to others.

## **CYP/16/24                      Post Ofsted Improvement Plan Update: Signs of Safety**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Lead for Children's Social Care which provided an update on the Signs of Safety social work model. The Strategic Director of Children's Services introduced the report across its main themes.

A member questioned whether members should receive training on this. The Executive Member for Children's Services informed the Committee that a launch event had taken place in February and some members had attended this. She reported that Signs of Safety linked into the 'Our Manchester' strengths-based approach and members had received training on this but that it could be beneficial to provide more training for members in relation to the Signs of Safety model. She

informed the Committee that Early Help, Signs of Safety and additional investment in children's services would secure progress in improving children's services.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Strategic Head of Early Help confirmed that schools had been included in the training on Signs of Safety. The Chair suggested that the Manchester Schools Alliance could assist in promoting this.

The Chair reported that the Signs of Safety model was attracting social workers to Manchester and that having a social work model in place was also important to Ofsted.

### **Decision**

To note the report.

### **CYP/16/25                      Overview Report**

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme.

The report on European Youth Capital 2019 was received late and published in a supplementary agenda due to clearance delays. The reports on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Part 1 and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Part 2 were received late and published in a supplementary agenda due to information not being available until after the main agenda was published.

A member requested that the Committee consider radicalisation and the Prevent agenda and its impact in schools. The Chair advised that this could fit within a wider report and that she would discuss this with the Director of Education and Skills outside of the meeting.

Members requested that all councillors receive training on the Prevent agenda, including both the duties within the strategy and the practicalities of its implementation.

### **Decisions**

1. To note the report.
2. To request that all councillors receive training on the Prevent agenda, including both the duties within the strategy and the practicalities of its implementation.