

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2016

Present:

Councillor Reid – in the Chair

Councillors Sameem Ali, Collins, Hewitson, Madeleine Monaghan, Reeves, Stone and Taylor

Co-opted Voting Members:

Mrs B Kellner, Representative of the Diocese of Manchester

Mrs J Miles, Representative of the Diocese of Salford

Ms M Neall, Parent governor representative

Co-opted Non Voting Members:

Mr L Duffy, Secondary sector teacher representative

Ms J Gudgeon, Primary sector teacher representative

Councillor Andrews, Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Culture and Leisure

Councillor S Newman, Executive Member for Children's Services

Councillor Russell, Chair of Audit Committee

Councillor Hitchen, ward member for Miles Platting and Newton Heath

Councillor Igbon, ward member for Hulme

Councillor Karney, ward member for Harpurhey

Councillor Lanchbury, ward member for Higher Blackley

Councillor Sadler, ward member for Higher Blackley

Apologies:

Councillor K Simcock

CYP/16/41 Minutes

Decisions

1. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2016.
2. To receive the minutes of the Ofsted Subgroup meeting held on 27 September 2016.

CYP/16/42 Eve Holt

The Chair advised members that the 11 October meeting had been Eve Holt's last meeting as a Co-opted Member of the scrutiny committee and formally thanked her on behalf of the Committee.

CYP/16/43 Visits

The Chair reminded members that the visit to Rodney House School, which had been agreed at the 11 October meeting, would take place tomorrow.

The Executive Member for Children's Services reported that Wetherby Young Offenders Institute was willing to accommodate a visit but that a maximum of four or five people would be able to attend.

CYP/16/44 Post Ofsted Improvement Plan Update: North Manchester

The Committee received a report of the North Locality Service Managers which provided an overview of the demography of need and deprivation within the North Locality of Manchester City Council. The report outlined the operational activity and strategic aims to enable the locality to continually improve the social work and early help provision, as part of Manchester Children's Services' ongoing improvement journey. The Strategic Director of Children's Services and the Service Manager (North Locality) introduced the report across its main themes.

The Executive Member for Children's Services advised that this report had been requested due to the high social work caseloads in north Manchester and data about high levels of need, deprivation, domestic abuse and child neglect. She reported that since the decision to invest a further £10 million in children's services, more social workers and managers had been recruited, focusing on the high need areas and, as a result, caseloads had reduced significantly but that there was still a high level of referrals in north Manchester.

The Committee discussed the role of other organisations in north Manchester, including the voluntary sector. The Service Manager (North Assessment Team) outlined a range of agencies that worked with the Council to support children and families in north Manchester. The Executive Member for Children's Services highlighted the role of Big Manchester, which adopted a multi-agency approach to helping families and the role of other Council services, such as housing and neighbourhood teams, in improving north Manchester. The ward councillor for Harpurhey reported that resident associations and community associations were important in north Manchester and should be invested in.

The ward councillor for Harpurhey highlighted concerns about the health service in North Manchester and intergenerational poverty. He advised that a radical redesign of health services and an integrated model for tackling unemployment were needed. He suggested that north Manchester councillors arrange to meet frontline staff to take these issues further. The Strategic Director of Children's Services reported that, as part of devolution, significant changes to health services were planned. He also informed members of work to refresh the Family Poverty Strategy which was being factored into the Children and Young People's Plan.

The Committee discussed the data in the report, including areas of concern and asked whether the data indicated an improvement. A member requested that future reports include further analysis of the reasons for the disparity between north Manchester and the rest of the city. The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that, while she welcomed that extensive audit work was being carried out, the reports back to Audit Committee provided limited assurance particularly around case work supervision. The Strategic Director of Children's Services reported that Audit's findings indicated continuing improvement which demonstrated that the Council was

taking the correct actions to improve children's services. He acknowledged that further improvement was needed but advised that the service was moving in the right direction. In response to a member's question, he reported that the data in the report was the information which was available at the time but that more up-to-date information would be included in the State of the City report.

The ward councillor for Higher Blackley noted that neglect was linked to poverty and expressed concern that it might, therefore, rise due to issues such as the benefits cap and rising food prices. She asked for assurance that the plans for North Manchester were sustainable beyond the current period of additional investment. The Executive Member for Children's Service reported that Early Help and good quality social work intervention were key to reducing the level of need and the number of referrals for social services. The Strategic Director of Children's Services reported that the number of repeat referrals had reduced, which indicated that the quality of social work intervention was improving and more families were receiving the right intervention the first time and not being re-referred.

In response to a member's question, the Strategic Head of Early Help reported that the demand for Early Help was very high in the north of the city and there were additional resources and staffing in place to support this.

The Chair recommended that a Subgroup be established to consider the issues in North Manchester and their underlying causes, to include housing issues, including homeless families, and to involve north Manchester councillors.

Decision

To propose the establishment of a Subgroup to consider the issues in North Manchester and their underlying causes, to include housing issues, including homeless families, and to involve north Manchester councillors.

CYP/16/45 Complex Safeguarding

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which provided a progress update on developments within Complex Safeguarding. The report covered a range of complex vulnerabilities and included updates on developments in Greater Manchester and information on activity and impact in Manchester. The Strategic Director of Children's Services and the Strategic Head of Early Help introduced the report across its main themes.

The Committee discussed the radicalisation of young people, welcoming that the report included far right extremism as well as Islamist-related extremism. The Chair reported that she had attended Prevent training which had highlighted the vulnerability of young men with autism and asperger's to being radicalised. The Chair recommended that the issues of Prevent and far right extremism be referred to the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee.

The ward councillor for Hulme welcomed that the Council was investing in work to safeguard young people from organised crime and gang activity, although she advised that 'gang' was an unhelpful term and that 'group negative activity' was more

appropriate. She emphasised the important role of the voluntary sector and youth and play workers in this area and advised that it was important that this work continued. The Community Safety Lead agreed that it was important to work with the voluntary and community sector and to use their knowledge and outlined work with these groups that had taken place in north Manchester and could be expanded to other areas of the city. The Chair expressed concern that universal services such as youth work had been cut and that these services could identify issues and keep young people out of trouble.

A member, who was also a north Manchester councillor, expressed concern that the work taking place in north Manchester was not sufficient to tackle the problems of organised crime in the area and suggested that the North Manchester Subgroup also look at issues of organised crime in the north of the city, to which the Chair agreed.

In response to members' questions, the Strategic Head of Early Help outlined the Council's work with the Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), including that Early Help Practitioners were working in the PRUs, and work to support parents and develop their parenting skills.

A member noted that a review of the Protect Team had been commissioned and requested that the Committee receive a report on this at a future meeting.

A member informed the Committee of news reports about children in illegal schools and requested an update on this at a future meeting. The Director of Education and Skills reported that this related to unregistered schools providing alternative provision commissioned by secondary schools. He reported that most alternative provision in Manchester was commissioned and quality assured by the PRU. He recommended that the issues relating to alternative provision be incorporated into the report on the PRU which was scheduled for a future meeting. The Chair also raised concerns about young people who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) and about home education. She recommended that these issues be incorporated into a future report.

Decisions

1. To recommend that the issues of Prevent and far right extremism be referred to the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee.
2. To recommend that, should a North Manchester Subgroup be established, it also consider issues relating to organised crime in the north of the city.
3. To recommend that the Committee receive a report on the review of the Protect Team at a future meeting.
4. To recommend that the Committee receive further information on alternative provision, including unregistered schools and home education, at a future meeting.
5. To recommend that the appropriate scrutiny committee receive a report on young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)

[Councillor Stone declared a personal interest as a governor at the Secondary Pupil Referral Unit]

[Councillor Igbon declared a personal interest as an employee of Manchester Young

Lives]

CYP/16/46 Budget Savings Options - Background Information
CYP/16/47 Children's Services Directorate Budget Report
CYP/16/48 Locality Plan Budget Report

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services, the Director of Education and Skills and the City Treasurer. The report and the appended Directorate Budget report and Locality Plan report set out the financial considerations, current forecast position and savings options for the period to 2019/20. Detailed findings of the recent budget conversation held with the residents, businesses, partners and other stakeholders of Manchester were also appended. The Director of Education and Skills and the Strategic Director of Children's Services introduced the report across its main themes.

The Executive Member for Children's Services expressed concern at the effect that previous budget cuts were already having and that Manchester was disproportionately affected by this. She outlined the aspirations that the city had for its children and young people but advised that a fair settlement from national government was needed to help the city achieve these.

The Chair expressed concern that there was insufficient detail in the report regarding the savings options for the school crossing patrols. A member asked how much the previous investment for crossings was, how much providing an individual school crossing patrol cost, how much further investment was required, and how many crossing patrols this would equate to. The Director of Education and Skills reported that school crossings were rated as 'red', 'amber' or 'green' based on a real-time assessment at the beginning and end of the school day, taking into account a number of factors including the number of children and parents, the physical environment and the volume and nature of the traffic flow. He reported that the Council did not fund school crossing patrols for crossings rated as 'green', although schools could choose to provide a crossing patrol from their budget, and 12 schools had done this

In response to a member's question, the Director of Education and Skills informed members that it had been agreed during the previous year's budget decisions, as part of the budget plan for Highways, to invest in improving the physical infrastructure around school crossings, which would make the crossings safer for the whole community at all times of day, rather than just before and after school. He reported that, following this work, the rating for school crossings would be reassessed and it was expected that some of the crossings previously rated as 'red' would be reassessed as 'amber'. He advised that the report put forward a savings option for the Council to stop funding school crossing patrols for crossings rated as 'amber'. He reported that primary and secondary heads had been briefed on the savings option being considered. Members queried what the difference was between 'amber' and 'red' and requested a better explanation of this. A member said a patrol he was aware of that had been downgraded from red to amber but he could not understand why. Members requested a breakdown of all crossing patrols, what rating they had been given and why.

Members discussed their concerns regarding this option, including whether the investment by Highways would make the crossings safer, that this aspect of the option was outside of the scrutiny committee's remit and whether other changing factors over time, such as new housing estates and new schools becoming fully operational across all school years, could negatively impact on safety after the assessment had taken place. A member expressed concern that once reviewed many crossing patrols would actually be given an increased risk rating. The Chair expressed concern at the impact on school crossing patrol staff who could lose their jobs. A member reported that parents were very concerned about the proposals due to the increasing number of cars and aggressive drivers on the roads and the vulnerability of small children. A member added that the behaviour of pedestrians had also changed with many using personal electronic devices adding to the risk. Members noted that, while schools could choose to fund school crossing patrols, their budgets would be affected by forthcoming changes to the funding formula for schools. A member stressed that schools and parents should be involved in the solution.

The ward member for Harpurhey advised that officers needed to invest more time in researching this issue as there was not currently a convincing case for this option. Members agreed that they needed further information in order to scrutinise this option thoroughly. The Chair requested that the Committee receive further information at a future meeting, including details of the crossings assessed as 'red' and 'amber' and the reasons for this, details of the surveys done and the conversations with schools and details of the proposed changes to be made by Highways to make the crossings safer.

The Committee discussed the savings options for the city's Sure Start Centres, noting the valuable role of Sure Start, including its role in Early Help. A member questioned whether the remaining Sure Start Centres would have the capacity to support all the additional children and families if eight of the centres ceased to be designated Sure Start Centres. The Director of Education and Skills reported that there would be no decrease in the number of Outreach Workers employed to support families but that they would be based at fewer sites, which would save the Council money. He advised that it was likely that the eight sites identified would continue to be used to provide services to children, their families and the community and that some were likely to be taken over by schools. He advised that a statutory consultation process on this had started on 3 November. The ward councillor for Northenden advised that the Committee needed more detail on the services provided from the centres and the number of families receiving support there. The Chair reported that the Committee needed more information to reach a view on this option. She asked what information was included in the consultation, advising that the public needed sufficiently detailed information in order to be able to give their views. She requested that the Committee receive further information on this option at a future meeting.

At members' request, the Director of Education and Skills outlined the options to rescale the Early Years New Delivery Model and for the Health Visitor contract.

The ward councillor for Miles Platting and Newton Heath asked what Youth and Play services which would be cut if the funding was reduced. The Director of Education

and Skills reported that an Independent Youth and Play Trust had been established to commission youth and play provision. He advised that part of the Trust's role was to maximise funding from other sources so it was hoped that the overall level of youth and play provision could be maintained through this additional funding, despite a reduced Council budget. The Chair expressed concern that there was limited information in the report on this and on the options for short breaks. The Chair requested further information on all the areas discussed.

A member reported that, if the national government's proposal to cut the Education Services Grant went ahead, it would result in the removal of some education services provided by the Council such as school improvement support. He requested that the Committee support the proposal that funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) be used to mitigate this loss, to which members agreed.

The Strategic Director of Children's Services provided an overview of the appended report on the Locality Plan. The Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing outlined the proposed approach to transforming the health and social care system, as part of the devolution of health and adult social care to Greater Manchester, and the importance of partners working together in a different way to reduce costs and provide better outcomes for residents. The Chair informed members that the Health Scrutiny Committee was also considering the Locality Plan.

In response to a member's question, the Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing acknowledged that the Plan was large and complicated. He reported that he had asked officers to look at how it could be broken down into more manageable sections, making it easier for people to read and understand, and that it could then be used to consult with young people. The Executive Member for Children's Services advised that the work to integrate services for children and young people would start from March 2017. The Strategic Director of Children's Services reported that a number of services for children and young people were in scope for this work, which would focus on integrated commissioning with Health partners and working creatively with partners to reduce costs. He offered to provide a list of the services which were in scope for this. In response to a member's question, the Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing offered to provide further information on how Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) fitted into this work. The Chair advised that the Committee would consider this further at a future date.

Decisions

1. To request that the Committee receive further information on the savings options for School Crossing Patrols at its 6 December meeting, including the crossings assessed as 'red' and 'amber' and the reasons for this, details of the surveys done and the conversations with schools and details of the proposed changes to be made by Highways to make the crossings safer.
2. To request that the Committee receive further information on the budget savings options for the Early Years New Delivery Model, the Health Visitor contract, Sure Start Centres, Youth and Play and Short Breaks at its 6 December meeting.
3. To support the proposal that funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) be used to mitigate service reductions resulting from cuts to the Education Services Grant.

4. To receive a further report on the Locality Plan as it relates to services for children and young people, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, at a future date.

[Councillor Collins declared a personal interest as a Board Member of the Factory Youth Zone]

CYP/16/49 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, which the Committee was asked to approve.

The report on the Budget Savings Options was received late and published in a supplementary agenda as the budget reports were published simultaneously.

The Chair asked members to inform her or the Committee Support Officer if they had any suggestions for the work programme and if they wished to join any of the proposed Subgroups.

Decision

To approve the work programme.