

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 6 December 2016

Subject: Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy

Report of: Executive Member for Children's Services

Summary

This report provides an overview of work undertaken and progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the Our Manchester strategy for those areas within the portfolio of the Executive Member for Children's Services .

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note and comment on the report.

Contact:

Name: Councillor Sheila Newman
Position: Executive Member for Children's Services
Tel: 0161 234 3311
Email: cldr.s.newman@manchester.gov.uk

1. Introduction

The Our Manchester Strategy was formally adopted by the Council in January 2016 and sets the ambitions for the city for the next ten years, to 2025, for Manchester to be:-

- Thriving – creating great jobs and healthy businesses
- Filled with talent – both home-grown talent and attracting the best in the world
- Fair – with equal chances for all to unlock their potential
- A great place to live – with lots of things to do
- Buzzing with connections – including world-class transport and broadband

Executive Members are collectively and individually responsible for supporting the delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy and for providing political oversight and direction to officers for the better outcomes for Manchester residents. In October, the Executive also published its collective political priorities and those of individual Executive Members, all of which are aligned to the Our Manchester Strategy.

This report sets out how I as the Executive Member for Children's Services have sought to deliver these priorities over the past six months. It is the first of twice yearly reports to this Committee, with reports being submitted to Scrutiny Committees at their May and November meetings from now on.

2. Executive Member for Children's Services - Portfolio

As Executive Member for Children's Services, my portfolio includes Children's Social Care, Schools and Early Years.

In addition, key initiatives or current pieces of work include:-

- Attending Children's Board to oversee all matters relating to children in Manchester.
- Helped draft the Children and Young People's Plan : 'Our Manchester, Our Children – building a safe, healthy, happy and successful future for our children and young people'. This plan has been approved by the Executive and Scrutiny Committees and the Health and Well Being Board, and has been discussed with children and young people.
- The plan contains 4 passions 1) Ensuring all children live in a safe, secure home. 2) Safely reducing the number of children in care. 3) Ensuring all children get the best start in life and are school ready. 4) All children should attend a Good School, and fulfill their potential.

3. Progress and Outcomes May- November 2016

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

- 3.1 Manchester Children's Social Care is currently rated Inadequate by OFSTED and are on an improvement journey. I work with officers, front line staff, partners and members to improve services for children in Manchester. Children's Services must ensure that children in Manchester are protected from abuse and neglect, get the best start in life and fulfil their potential.
- 3.2 I have undertaken and continue to undertake the following actions to lead this work :-
- Meet weekly with the Director of Children's Services and other senior officers as appropriate, to discuss and robustly challenge all aspects of the service, including budgets, referrals, Early Help, MASH, frontline social work, caseloads, audits, fostering and adoption, Looked After Children numbers and outcomes and workforce issues.
 - Undertake a monthly analysis of the scorecard to check progress on key indicators and challenge where progress is not being made swiftly enough and ensure that remedial action is being taken.
 - Attend monthly Improvement Board meetings with officers from Children's Services and other partners. I meet regularly with the Chair to discuss areas of concern. I meet with the Chair and the Leader to discuss the Chair's quarterly report to the Minister.
 - Attend bi-monthly meetings of the Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board. Meet with the Chair regularly and discuss issues of concern such as Child Sexual Exploitation, neglect and Missing from Home. The Board has to ensure that all partners are fulfilling their role in these areas.
 - Helped secure £10 million investment in Children's Services in order to recruit social workers and managers. This is reducing caseloads and improving the quality of social work. The investment was predicated on more effective management oversight of cases, regular supervision for all staff and better outcome in audits.
 - Chair the Corporate Parenting Panel which is a multi-agency meeting, open to all councillors, that oversees outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
 - Moved the meetings to monthly and focussed on the LAC Strategy and increased attendance of members and officers.
 - Focussed on increasing the number of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Looked After Children.
 - Ensured that post 16s LAC now have PEPs including those Not in Education, Employment or Training.
 - Set up Sub Groups for each of the six areas of the LAC strategy including health, education and accommodation.

- Discussed the 'Promise' to Looked After Children and care leavers with young people and ensured it was signed by members and senior officers and presented at a Council meeting.
 - Regularly visit Children's Services offices to get the views of frontline staff and discuss caseloads, supervision and the implementation of Signs of Safety and how the strength based approach can support families more effectively.
 - Attend staff briefings with the Director and speak to staff about Our Manchester, Signs of Safety, caseloads and budgets.
 - Attend appropriate conferences and training to ensure Manchester is following best practice. This includes an LGA event in Manchester where improving authorities can learn from best practice, and the National Children and Adults Conference held in Manchester where I attended an event on LAC outcomes.
 - Attend Regional and Greater Manchester events for lead Members. We are collaborating with other authorities in Greater Manchester on a number of workstreams including reducing LAC by 20%, schools, youth justice and complex safeguarding issues.
- 3.3 Feedback from OFSTED and Department of Education monitoring visits in September and October show that progress is being made. Caseloads have reduced and quality of audits are improving. As the full impact of the investment is felt further improvements need to follow. Caseloads should be at 18 by January 2017 and audits need to improve further.
- 3.4 The Number of Looked after Children has reduced to 1209 as of 11/11/16 compared to 1,245 at the end of last year.
- 3.5 This year saw significant improvement in the number of LAC attaining 5 A*-Cs in their GCSES including English and maths. I aim to build on this and increase the number of LACs achieving in line with their peers.
- 3.6 Adoption rates have improved with more children adopted at a faster rate. 87 children have been adopted this year compared to 67 the previous year.

SCHOOLS

- 3.7 One of the key objectives of the Our Manchester Strategy is to ensure that all children get the best start in life and are school ready. Every child should attend a good school, enjoy their learning and fulfil their potential.
- 3.8 I have undertaken and continue to undertake the following actions to lead this work:
- Meet regularly with Director of Education and senior officers to receive reports on OFSTED outcomes and any schools causing concern. Ensuring that

appropriate action is taken to support schools. Wherever possible support is given by a school working in Manchester.

- Challenge on sufficiency of school places. This includes receiving regular updates on school places and children without a school place and agreeing plans to expand schools as necessary and reviewing place plans for future school places. In the next few years, many new secondary school places will be required and expanding existing schools will not be sufficient to meet need. I also work with officers on plans for free schools, particularly schools that are being funded by our Basic Need fund. Examples of this are Dean Trust Ardwick and MEA Central.
- Follow up cases referred to me by members concerning school places. Main aim is to ensure that every child has a school place. I receive reports on children missing education and ensure that lessons are learnt from casework.
- Support Read Manchester, a year long campaign to get residents reading, making reading exciting, so that more people will enjoy reading, and literacy levels and school results will improve.

3.9 Currently 93% of our primary schools are rated Good or Outstanding by OFSTED. This is above the national average. 64% of our secondary schools were judged to be Good or Outstanding by OFSTED and this is below the national average so remains a challenge.

3.10 KS2 results remain in line with the national average and have been so over the last three years. KS4 results have improved since last year and are reducing the gap with national figures.

EARLY YEARS

3.11 I have undertaken and continue to undertake the following actions to lead this work:

- Ensure there are sufficient nursery and early years settings, so that all three and four year olds have access to good quality places for at least 15 hours ; more vulnerable children can access 30 hours of provision ; and vulnerable 2 year olds can access 15 hours of provision. From September 2018 we need enough places so that all three and four year olds with working parents can access 30 hours free early education. Manchester is on track to achieve this.
- Support the Early Years New Delivery Model which ensures that all new born babies are visited and support provided as necessary. Eight assessments will be undertaken by health visitors until the child starts school.
- Visit schools and nursery settings as regularly as possible.

3.12 The number of nursery settings rated Good or Outstanding is increasing.

- 3.13 Although I take the political lead in all these areas, all achievements are a result of collective efforts. Our Manchester can only be delivered with the work and commitment of staff, members, parents, foster carers and volunteers. Together we can create a great future for children and young people in Manchester and deliver Our Manchester, Our Children – building a future that is safe, healthy, happy and successful for our children and young people. Thank you for your contribution.