

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2017

Present:

Councillor Reid – in the Chair

Councillors Sameem Ali, Collins [CYP/17/06 - CYP/17/13], Hewitson, 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 [CYP/17/06 - CYP/17/10]

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 S Newman, Executive Member for Children's Services

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Culture and Leisure

Councillor Flanagan, Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

Reko, member of the Hive and Vice Chair of Manchester Young Carers' Forum

Yasmina, Chair of the Manchester Young Carers' Forum

Vanessa, member of the Youth Parliament, The Hive and the Young Leaders' Forum

Phil Hoyland, Headteacher, Primary Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

Helen McAndrew, Headteacher, Secondary PRU

Apologies:

Councillor K Simcock

CYP/17/06 Minutes

Decisions

1. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 3 January 2017.
2. To receive the minutes of the Ofsted Subgroup meeting held on 13 December 2016.

CYP/17/07 Ofsted Subgroup

A member who was also the Chair of the Ofsted Subgroup reported that Liz Clarke was now acting as the Lead Officer for the Subgroup. He asked the Committee to agree that the Terms of Reference be amended to reflect this change, to which members agreed. He informed members that the next meeting on 14 February would be at 10.00 am as the later time slot, which had been trialled at the previous two meetings, had not improved attendance levels. He also invited members to join the Subgroup. Ms Neall and Councillor Collins requested to join the Subgroup, to which the Committee agreed. The Chair requested that any other members who

wanted to join the Subgroup inform the Subgroup Chair.

Decisions

1. To request that the Terms of Reference for the Ofsted Subgroup be updated, with Liz Clarke to be the named Lead Officer.
2. To add Ms Neall and Councillor Collins to the membership of the Subgroup.

CYP/17/08 Participation and Engagement Strategy

The Committee received a report of the Head of Youth Strategy and the Head of Quality Assurance for Safeguarding which outlined the wide range of engagement activities that children and young people were involved in across the city. It also provided an update on the Children's Rights Service delivered by Coram Voice. It summarised the work that was underway to refresh the children and young people's engagement strategy, Our City Our Say, which presented a clear vision and strategic plan to increase the participation and influence of children and young people in the decisions that impacted on their lives and the communities in which they lived. The Director of Education and Skills introduced the report across its main themes.

The Committee welcomed three young people, Reko, Yasmina and Vanessa, who provided members with an overview of their roles and work they had been involved in. Reko informed the Committee that he was a member of The Hive, which was for young people who wanted to be more involved in running the Youth Council. He reported that he was also the Vice Chair of the Manchester Young Carers' Forum and was aiming to become a member of the Youth Parliament this year. Yasmina informed members that she was the Chair of the Manchester Young Carers' Forum and had been a member of the Youth Parliament in 2014. Vanessa reported that she was currently the member of the Youth Parliament for Manchester and that she was part of The Hive and the Young Leaders' Forum. The young people informed members of how they had engaged with the Council, for example, participating in the Budget Conversation as part of the Council's budget-setting process and being involved in recruiting to positions within the Council, including the new Chief Executive and the new Safeguarding Officer. Vanessa informed members about the Youth Council's work in relation to the Make Your Mark Campaign, a national run ballot on the issues that young people wanted to campaign on. She reported that Manchester had had the fourth highest turnout of voters and she and another young person had won an award for this. The young people informed members how they had progressed the campaign issues raised, including meeting with a local MP.

Members thanked the young people for attending. The Committee discussed the issues facing young carers. Yasmina and Reko shared their personal experiences as young carers. Yasmina reported that school attendance was an issue for young carers and advised that schools needed to have a better understanding of the issues young carers faced. Reko advised that he had to provide proof of reasons for absence in order to receive the 16 – 19 bursary fund, and that this created additional work for him. He reported that he relied upon this money and wanted reassurance that he would receive what he was entitled to. The Chair expressed concern that schools and colleges were being pressurised by Ofsted on attendance.

The Executive Member for Children's Services advised that schools and colleges needed to be sensitive to the needs of young carers. She expressed her support for the Curriculum for Life, one of the top five campaign topics voted for by Manchester young people, which requested that schools cover topics such as finance, sex and relationship education and politics. She reported that the Director of Education and Skills had raised this with Headteachers and that the Council had recently passed a motion on sex and relationship education in schools. She informed members how the Corporate Parenting Panel was engaging with Looked After Children and care leavers.

The Executive Member for Culture and Leisure reported that there was good engagement with young people in Manchester but it needed to improve further, including improving engagement with the organisations affiliated to Manchester Youth Council and ensuring that young people were aware that processes existed to enable them to participate in civic life.

Decisions

1. To thank the young people for attending.
2. To note the report.

CYP/17/09 Budget Process 2017-2020: Consideration of the Executive's Draft Budget Proposals and Directorate Budget Reports and Business Plans

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Children's Services), the Director of Education and Skills and the City Treasurer which provided an update on the Council's financial position and set out next steps in the budget process, including scrutiny of the Executive's draft Budget proposals and Directorate Budget and Business Plan reports and accompanying delivery plans by the Committee.

The Executive Member for Children's Services drew members' attention to the consolidated schedule table in Appendix 3 of the report which summarised the proposals for Children's Services. She outlined which budget savings options were and were not being taken forward and which had been amended from the original budget savings options, including the proposal for school crossing patrols. The Executive Member for Culture and Leisure reported that the saving option to reduce the youth commissioning fund was not being taken forward.

The Chair reported that, due to good management by the Council and airport dividends, the budget savings needed were not as severe as they might have been. She noted that at a previous meeting, as part of the discussion on school crossing patrols, the Committee had agreed to establish a Road Safety Around Schools Task and Finish Group, in conjunction with the Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee. She invited other members of the Committee to join her and some members of the Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the Task and Finish Group. Councillors Sameem Ali and Collins requested to join the Task and Finish Group. The Chair requested that any other members who wanted to join the Task and Finish Group let her or the Committee Support Officer know.

A member reported that the Schools Funding Forum had supported the proposal that funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) be used to mitigate service reductions resulting from cuts to the Education Services Grant.

The Committee discussed the proposed changes to the national funding formula for schools, noting that Manchester would be one of the top ten worst affected areas if this were implemented. A member reported that this proposal was currently being consulted on. Members noted that the Schools Funding Forum and the Council would be responding to the consultation, expressing their concerns about the impact it would have on Manchester schools, and encouraged all schools and governing bodies to respond to the consultation.

The Chair requested further information on the impact of the revised early years funding formula on Manchester's two nursery schools (schools for under-fives which were not attached to a primary school). The Director of Education and Skills reported that the government had determined that there should be a single early years funding rate within a local area which applied across the different types of early years provision. He advised that the city's nursery schools had previously received higher funding than other early years providers and that the Council was working with them to try to mitigate the impact of this funding reduction. In response to a question from the Chair, the Directorate Finance Lead confirmed that this single funding rate would also apply to childminders, for whom this would represent an increase in funding.

The Executive Member for Children's Services expressed concern that the single funding rate did not take account of the additional services that the nursery schools provided. The Chair requested that the Committee receive a further report on the single funding rate for early years providers and its likely future impact.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Director of Education and Skills outlined the proposal that the 'headroom' (the funding remaining after the Council had distributed to schools the funding they were entitled to) would be allocated to the Growth Fund, which funded additional pupils who were not yet accounted for in the annual census. He explained that, following a change in government rules, this included places in new government-backed free schools. A member reported that the Schools Funding Forum considered this change in government regulations on free schools to be unfair to local authorities and would be writing to the Secretary of State on this.

The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources congratulated the Committee on their role in moulding the budget proposals. He advised that the Executive had listened to members' views on school crossing patrols and Sure Start and had reflected these in their draft budget proposals. He also praised the Council's Communications Team for their work on the public budget conversation and consultation and the way they had targeted under-represented communities.

Members agreed that they reluctantly accepted the Executive's budget proposals, in light of the budget savings required.

Decisions:

1. To reluctantly accept the budget proposals, in the light of the budget savings required.
2. To add Councillors Reid, Sameem Ali and Collins to the membership of the Road Safety Around Schools Task and Finish Group
3. To receive a further report on the single funding rate for early years providers and its likely future impact.

CYP/17/10 Update on Pupil Referral Units and school exclusions; information on unregistered schools, independent schools and supplementary schools

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education and Skills which provided an update on school exclusions for 2015/16, an update on the primary and secondary Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), and information on unregistered schools, independent schools and supplementary schools. The Director of Education and Skills provided an overview of the report. Members welcomed Phil Hoyland, Headteacher of the Primary PRU and Helen McAndrew, Headteacher of the Secondary PRU.

The Committee discussed fixed term and permanent exclusions across different pupil groups, including Looked After Children (LAC) and pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN). A member expressed concern that pupils with SEN were being excluded. The Head of Education Strategy, Access and Inclusion reported that the majority of these were pupils with social, emotional or mental health needs and that this indicated that schools were identifying these needs and putting in place support before reaching the point of using fixed-term or permanent exclusion. A member expressed concern that reductions in school funding could lead schools to cut the number of support staff, resulting in less support for more vulnerable pupils and an increase in exclusions as schools were less able to deal with these pupils. Phil Hoyland advised that governing bodies should scrutinise exclusions more, particularly where they related to pupils with SEN.

The Chair advised that Early Help had an important role to play in preventing children and young people from reaching the point where they were excluded. She expressed concern that some schools were quicker than others to exclude pupils, without fully considering other options. She requested that the Committee receive a further report on school exclusions at a future meeting, to include information on the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions at each Manchester school over the past three years.

Helen McAndrew informed members that all but two high schools in Manchester had engaged in working with the Secondary PRU to develop a shared strategy to try to reduce permanent exclusions. She highlighted that this presented some risks to the high school as they were paying to place the pupil at the PRU and were still accountable for the pupil's outcomes which could negatively impact on the school's performance figures.

The Committee discussed the issue of social media, including its role in bullying. A member reported that pupils and parents did not understand the risks and that stronger communication was needed. Another commented that this was a fast changing area and teachers needed more training on how to deal with these issues.

The Strategic Director of Children's Services advised that he would discuss the issue of social media at the Manchester Safeguarding Children Board's Complex Safeguarding Subgroup.

In response to a question from the Chair, Helen McAndrew reported that the In Year Fair Access Protocol had been in place for a number of years and it was now no longer difficult to find a school place for a pupil at the PRU who was ready to enter a mainstream school. Phil Hoyland advised that it was more challenging to persuade primary schools to accept a pupil from the Primary PRU, particularly in Year 6. A member reported that most primary schools were already above their normal admission numbers and, therefore, might not be able to accommodate an additional child from the PRU.

Decision

To receive a further report on school exclusions at a future meeting, to include information on the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions at each Manchester school over the past three years.

[Councillor Stone declared a personal interest as a governor at the Secondary PRU.]

CYP/17/11 Post Ofsted Improvement Plan Update: Ofsted's Monitoring Visit of the Local Authority

CYP/17/12 Post Ofsted Improvement Plan Update: Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers and Standards of Social Work Practice

The Committee received two reports of the Strategic Director of Children's Services. The first report outlined the content of the Ofsted monitoring visit letter addressed to the Strategic Director of Children's Services dated 25 January 2017. It also summarised actions being taken by the Council in response to the issues raised by the monitoring visit that required ongoing improvement. The second report set out progress against the recruitment and retention programme for the scale up in capacity of the social work service in order to adequately manage overall demand whilst reducing caseloads to safe levels; and improvements in the standard of social work practice. The Strategic Director of Children's Services and the Strategic Lead (Children's Social Care) introduced the reports.

The Executive Member for Children's Services advised that she was confident that social work practice was improving as this was demonstrated by both the statistics and the feedback from the Ofsted monitoring visit, although, she advised, consistency of practice still needed to improve further.

Members discussed the new Adolescent Support Unit, Alonzi House, and the Executive Member for Children's Services informed members about her recent visit there. The Chair requested that the Committee visit Alonzi House once it was registered with Ofsted to provide overnight respite care.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Strategic Director of Children's Services and the Strategic Lead (Children's Social Care) provided an overview of the training and development already available and being developed for social work staff.

The Strategic Director of Children's Services informed members that the Ofsted inspection visit had focused on the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and the Child Protection Conference Chairs and praised the contribution of the staff. He advised members that Ofsted would be carrying out another monitoring visit on 5 and 6 March 2017.

Decision

To request that the Committee visit Alonzi House once it is registered with Ofsted to provide overnight respite care.

CYP/17/13 Greater Manchester Review of Children's Services

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which provided an overview of the opportunities being explored for Children's Services across Greater Manchester as part of the 'city deal' secured by Manchester City Council and its partners. The Strategic Director of Children's Services delivered a presentation which provided further information on this, including the rationale for devolution, the key themes and proposals for the transformation programme and the potential delivery models.

The Executive Member for Children's Services reported that the Greater Manchester councils were waiting for government approval and funding but that there were some aspects of the work that they could proceed on now. She advised that this work provided the opportunity for local authorities to work together and support and learn from each other while also providing some economies of scale. She reported that joint working was already taking place within Greater Manchester on some areas of work and that it would be beneficial to expand this into some other work areas. She advised that power would be devolved down from central government rather than local authorities relinquishing power over their Children's Services.

The Strategic Director of Children's Services reported that the Council was engaging in opportunities to work with other local authorities, including working with Rochdale and Wigan through Achieving Change Together to tackle child sexual exploitation (CSE). He advised that this work had reduced the need for young people to be placed in secure accommodation.

The Committee discussed the current provision of young offenders' institutions and secure accommodation and the Chair requested that a visit be arranged for Committee members to Barton Moss Secure Care Centre.

In response to a member's question, the Strategic Director of Children's Services reported that the requirement for a 'Chief Officer' post came from the Alan Wood report of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) and had been incorporated into the Children and Families Bill which was currently going through Parliament.

The Chair recommended that the Committee receive a further report which provided more information on the proposals for Greater Manchester Children's Services, the

Children and Families Bill and the Alan Wood review of LSCB, including the implications for Manchester City Council.

The Director of Education and Skills provided an overview of the proposal for a Greater Manchester Education and Employability Board, advising that the Board would bring together work which was already taking place, including the Greater Manchester Learning Partnership and Greater Manchester School Place Planning, and add a strand of work on employability. In response to a question from the Chair, he advised that the information provided in the report and presentation related to the education of children up to the age of 16.

Decisions

1. To receive a further report which provides more information on the proposals for Greater Manchester Children's Services, the Children and Families Bill and the Alan Wood review of LSCB, including the implications for Manchester City Council.
2. To request that a visit be arranged for Committee members to the Barton Moss Secure Care Centre.

CYP/17/14 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.

A member thanked officers for the reports provided to the meeting, advising that they were written in a more user-friendly way. The Chair reminded members that, from May 2017 onwards, the Committee's meetings would move to 2.00 pm.

The Post Ofsted Improvement Plan Update on Ofsted's Monitoring Visit of the Local Authority was received late and published in a supplementary agenda as Ofsted did not publish the letter on the monitoring visit until after the original agenda had been issued. Appendix 4: Part 2 and Appendix 6 of the Budget Process 2017-2020 report were received late and published in supplementary agendas. The reason for this has not yet been confirmed.

Decision

To approve the work programme.