

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

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2017**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Reid – in the Chair

Councillors Sameem Ali, Collins, Hewitson, T Judge, Lone, Lovecy, Madeleine Monaghan, Stone and Taylor

#### **Co-opted Voting Members:**

Mrs J Miles, Representative of the Diocese of Salford

Ms M Neall, Parent Governor Representative

#### **Co-opted Non Voting Members:**

Ms J Gudgeon, Primary sector teacher representative

Councillor S Newman, Executive Member for Children's Services

Councillor Battle, Executive Member for Schools

Councillor Sheikh, Assistant Executive Member for Children's Services

Councillor Alijah, ward councillor for Fallowfield

#### **Apologies:**

Mrs B Kellner, Representative of the Diocese of Manchester

Mr L Duffy, Secondary sector teacher representative

### **CYP/17/23 Minute's Silence**

The Committee held a minute's silence for all the children and young people affected by recent tragedies, including the Manchester Arena attack and the Grenfell Tower fire in London.

### **CYP/17/24 Minutes**

#### **Decisions**

1. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2017.
2. To receive the minutes of the Ofsted Subgroup meeting held on 14 February 2017.

### **CYP/17/25 Establishing a Regional Adoption Agency**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which set out the proposals for Manchester City Council's Adoption Service to form a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) with four neighbouring local authorities and two voluntary adoption agencies. The Strategic Director of Children's Services and the Strategic Head of Children's Social Care introduced the report across its main themes.

A member asked how the RAA could be held to account by the Council and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. The Strategic Director advised that the Committee would continue to receive an annual report on adoption and Manchester's Directorate for Children and Families would continue to receive data on a monthly basis, which the Committee could request at any time. The Strategic Head of Children's Social Care reported that she and the Head of Services for Looked After Children (LAC) were members of the RAA Board. The Chair expressed concern that, as not all the partners were within Greater Manchester, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) would not have oversight of the agency. In response to a member's question, the Executive Member for Children's Services advised that some other Greater Manchester local authorities had already entered into a separate RAA so were not part of this.

The Committee discussed the implications of becoming part of the RAA, both financially and for Manchester children. The Strategic Director reported that, while the likely impact had been assessed, this was a new way of working with a number of variables so ongoing evaluation was needed and all authorities involved had requested that a 12 month review clause be included to ensure an equitable funding arrangement. The Executive Member for Children's Services reported that Manchester had more children awaiting adoption and fewer prospective adopters while the situation was reversed in some of the other local authority areas which would be part of the RAA. In response to a member's question, she acknowledged that, as Manchester had a larger Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community than the other areas, the Council might need to look more within its own area for BME prospective adopters. In response to a member's question, the Strategic Head of Children's Social Care assured members that there was a rigorous adoption process, with matches made based on the adopter's ability to meet the needs of the child.

In response to a member's question, the Strategic Director reported that each local authority and agency had its own IT system with data on its own children and prospective adopters but that middleware would be introduced to enable communication between the different systems.

A member questioned whether the Council would have influence over commissioning if this work was being led by Stockport Council. The Strategic Director reported that the Council would work with Stockport Council and other partners to address any concerns that arose.

The Chair recommended that the Committee note the report and that officers take into account the issues raised by members, including the accountability of the RAA, how this work links in with devolution, the oversight of the commissioning process, the compatibility of IT systems, monitoring and evaluation and the matching of BME and mixed race children with suitable adopters.

## **Decision**

To note the report and recommend that officers take into account the issues raised by members, including the accountability of the RAA, how this work links in with devolution, the oversight of the commissioning process, the compatibility of IT

systems, monitoring and evaluation and the matching of BME and mixed race children with suitable adopters.

### **CYP/17/26 Improving Outcomes for Care Leavers**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which provided an overview of how the Care Leavers Service had developed and summarised the progress and outcomes care leavers had made against those areas requested by the Committee in September 2016. The Strategic Director of Children's Services and the Strategic Head of Children's Social Care introduced the report.

A member welcomed that the percentage of Manchester care leavers attending university was double the national average and asked whether local universities were working with the Council to promote their courses to care leavers and provide financial support to them. The Strategic Director confirmed that the universities were working with the Council on this, that care leavers attending university were entitled to a bursary and that one of the local universities had care leaver ambassadors who mentored other care leavers to encourage them to go to university.

The Committee discussed a range of issues relating to care leavers including care leavers in custody, care leavers who became young parents and the impact of current Edge of Care and Early Help strategies in reducing the number of care leavers in future. In relation to LAC and care leavers in custody, the Chair reported that Committee members had recently visited Wetherby Young Offenders Institution and that a visit was being arranged to Barton Moss Secure Care Centre.

A member expressed concern that the housing cost element of Universal Credit had been removed for 18 – 21 year olds. The Strategic Director informed members that a report would be going to Executive and the relevant scrutiny committee to propose that Manchester care leavers living in the city be exempt from paying Council Tax. A member welcomed this proposal.

The Strategic Head of Children's Social Care informed the Committee that the care leavers who accessed the Adult Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) were considered as vulnerable adults and treated as a priority. The Chair suggested that all those contacting the Adult MASH be asked whether they were care leavers to ensure that this was picked up. The Strategic Head of Children's Social Care advised that, for Manchester care leavers, this information would already be in the local authority's records.

In response to a member's question, the Strategic Head of Children's Social Care outlined the strategies being used to reduce the number of care leavers who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The Strategic Director reported that the Council had made care leavers a priority group for the social value element of procurement so, when it was awarding contracts to external organisations, it would take into account whether the organisation was providing opportunities such as apprenticeships, employment and mentoring to care leavers.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Strategic Head of Children's Social Care informed members that a report on the review of leaving care services would be brought to a future meeting.

The Chair reminded members that all councillors were Corporate Parents and were invited to attend the Corporate Parenting Panel, which considered issues relating to LAC and care leavers in detail.

The Chair recommended that the Committee note the content of the report and endorse the ongoing planned service development. She recommended that the Corporate Parenting Panel and the appropriate scrutiny committee consider the issues raised in more detail at a future meeting, to include the Leaving Care Service, housing issues for care leavers, care leavers who were NEET, education and employment opportunities, links with universities, including mentoring schemes, apprenticeships and the social value element of procurement.

## **Decisions**

1. To note the content of the report and endorse the ongoing planned service development.
2. To request that the Corporate Parenting Panel and the appropriate scrutiny committee consider the issues raised in more detail at a future meeting, to include the Leaving Care Service, housing issues for care leavers, care leavers who were NEET, education and employment opportunities, links with universities, including mentoring schemes, apprenticeships and the social value element of procurement.

[Councillor Taylor declared a personal interest as a Trustee of the charity Manchester Settlement.]

## **CYP/17/27 Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Member for Children's Services which provided 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 her portfolio. The Executive Member for Children's Services introduced the report across its main themes.

The Committee discussed the proposed National Funding Formula for schools, commenting that it was not clear whether this was now going ahead as proposed but that, if it did, it would negatively affect Manchester schools. Members also discussed the difference in Ofsted outcomes between Manchester's primary schools and its secondary schools. The Executive Member for Schools reported that, while there were issues with some schools, the majority of schools in Manchester were providing a good education. She advised that the city had many great primary schools and was in the top third of the country for primary provision. She acknowledged that the quality of secondary provision was more varied but reported that it was improving. She advised that the Council provided support to schools to improve their performance but expressed concern that the local authority did not have direct control over academies and free schools which were not performing well. The Chair

agreed that it was a concern that this power lay with the Regional Schools Commissioner, rather than with the local authority. The Chair outlined the Progress 8 measure which was being used nationally to measure progress of pupils in secondary schools and advised that this summer's results would be a good indicator of how Manchester schools were performing.

In response to a member's question, the Executive Member for Children's Services acknowledged that some children were starting school who were not school ready and from families which lacked adequate parenting skills. She outlined the Early Years Delivery Model, which had been fully rolled out for children born after April 2016. She reported that, through this, Health Visitors assessed the development of children aged 0-5 and families were referred for support as appropriate, in order to address any issues at the earliest opportunity and prevent them from getting worse. She also highlighted the role that schools and Early Help Hubs played in early intervention. The Chair requested further information on the impact of visits from health visitors as part of the Early Years Delivery Model in a future report, including case studies.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Children's Services for the report.

### **Decision**

1. To note the report.
2. To request further information on the impact of visits from health visitors as part of the Early Years Delivery Model in a future report, including case studies.

### **CYP/17/28 Ofsted Subgroup**

The Committee received a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which provided members with the revised terms of reference and the current work programme for the Ofsted Subgroup. The Committee was asked to re-establish the Ofsted Subgroup for the 2017-18 municipal year and agree the terms of reference, work programme and membership of the Subgroup.

### **Decisions**

1. To re-establish the Ofsted Subgroup for the 2017-18 municipal year and agree the terms of reference and work programme.
2. That Councillor Stone be re-appointed as Chair of the Ofsted Subgroup and that Councillors Alijah, Collins, T Judge, Reid and Taylor and Mrs Kellner and Ms Neall be appointed to the Subgroup.

### **CYP/17/29 Road Safety Around Schools Task and Finish Group**

The Committee received a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which provided members with the terms of reference and the current work programme for the Road Safety Around Schools Task and Finish Group. The Committee was asked to re-establish the Task and Finish Group for the 2017-18 municipal year and agree its terms of reference, work programme and membership.

The Chair advised that this was a joint Task and Finish Group, in conjunction with Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee, which would put forward additional members from its Committee.

## **Decisions**

1. To re-establish the Road Safety Around Schools Task and Finish Group for the 2017-18 municipal year and agree the terms of reference and work programme.
2. That Councillor Reid be re-appointed as Chair of the Road Safety Around Schools Task and Finish Group and that Councillors Sameem Ali, Alijah, Collins, Lovecy, Madeleine Monaghan and Stone be appointed to the Task and Finish Group.

## **CYP/17/30 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.

## **Decision**

To approve the work programme.