

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 10 October 2017

Subject: Curriculum for Life

Report of: Interim Director of Education

Summary

This report provides a summary of the progress made to develop a Curriculum for Life for children and young people in the City.

Recommendations

Members are requested to note the contents of the report.

Wards Affected: All

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

None

1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1. In recent years there have been growing calls from young people locally, regionally and nationally for a ‘curriculum for life’, equipping children and young people with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the real world. There have been similar calls from employer organisations, who highlight a need for school and college leavers to be better prepared for work, particularly in terms of the softer skills like personal motivation and discipline, teamwork, communication etc. These two related issues can be defined as a “curriculum for life and employment”.
- 1.2. This paper aims to provide an initial basis for deeper discussion on the subject. It summarises the main issues raised by young people and employers, explores the case for change, and looks at where the current Manchester offer for children and young people could be strengthened. It concludes with high level proposals for how the work could be taken forward using an Our Manchester approach, working with children, young people, employers, education providers and wider stakeholders to co-design and co-deliver a curriculum.

2. What are young people, employers and the education sector saying?

- 2.1 In recent years young people - both nationally and locally - have consistently raised the importance of a “curriculum for life”. The North West Youth Forum identified it as its priority in 2013, 2014 and 2015, identifying a real demand for this from young people, and it was number 3 on Manchester Youth Council’s priority list in 2016. The National Youth Parliament has been pushing this agenda for a number of years, including a debate in the House of Commons in November 2012 and a full select committee review in 2014.
- 2.2 The evidence from the select committee found that young people’s experience of Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) was mixed. Although compulsory, it does not form part of the national curriculum, so despite good practice in places the quality of education is inconsistent across schools. The review concluded that schools play a vital role in helping young people to develop the knowledge and skills that will help them in later life.¹
- 2.3 The National Youth Parliament has led a national campaign to introduce a curriculum for life and to make it a statutory requirement for all schools. The campaign specified areas that young people identified that they wish to be taught in school, and which they felt that were lacking in some schools. The North West Youth Forum has also identified priority areas that they believe to be a priority for PSHE, which included political education, sex and relationship education, community cohesion, sustainable living and cultural awareness

¹ British Youth Council Select Committee (2013) “Curriculum for Life Report” at <http://www.byc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Youth-Select-Committee-A-Curriculum-for-Life-Report.pdf>

- 2.4 In addition to young people, employers have for several years been calling for school and college leavers to be better prepared for the world of work. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the British Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Institute of Directors have all called for an education system that provides school leavers with key skills and characteristics to thrive in the world of work. The CBI Education and Skills Survey² recognises that developing these skills depends on schools, colleges and businesses working together as partners. Supply and demand information from higher education bodies indicates that between the ages of 19-24, the most popular course types delivered in Manchester are around employability and preparation for life / the world of work. This shows a demand for this type of support from young people entering work and higher education.
- 2.5 Working and inspiring children and young people through good education can raise aspirations and lays the groundwork for future success and economic prosperity. Employers are willing to support through their corporate social responsibility programmes as it means that young people grow up to become better employees, and some organisations are already showing they are committed to this agenda. National practice programmes such as Barclays LifeSkills have been developed alongside teachers to help improve the life skills and employability of young people in the UK.
- 2.6 Both these calls from young people and employers place a strong emphasis on softer, non-cognitive skills and behavioural competences. Non cognitive skills have been identified by academics and employers as critical, and three quarters of UK employers believe there is already a soft skills gap in the workforce. 97% of UK employers believe soft skills are important to their current business success, and over half say skills like communication and teamwork are more important than traditional academic results³. This aligns with labour market analysis by the Council's Work and Skills and City Policy teams, which identified that employers are predominantly looking for skills including:
- Communication
 - Problem solving
 - Punctuality
 - Honesty and trustworthiness
 - Self motivation
 - Team working
 - Creativity
- 2.7 Research evidence concludes that both cognitive and non-cognitive skills are valued in the labour market, as formal qualifications do not capture all of the

² CBI/ Pearson (2015) Inspiring Growth - Education and Skills Survey at http://www.cbi.org.uk/index.cfm/_api/render/file/?method=inline&fileID=92095A98-3A90-4FBD-9AF891997B103F50

³ Backing Soft Skills Campaign (2015) at <http://www.backingsoftskills.co.uk/>

aspects of an individual's value to future employers (Almlund et al, 2011⁴). Evidence from Backing Soft Skills, a campaign supported by the CBI, businesses and youth organisations, suggest that non cognitive or softer skills currently contribute £88bn to the UK economy, with this contribution predicted to increase to £109 billion during the next five years.

- 2.8 Research evidence also concludes that non cognitive skills need to be developed from an early age to tackle inequality (Heckman, 2011)⁵. Evidence suggests that children and young people are more susceptible to developing softer skills at two key points in their life cycle: the early years and then again in adolescence around 12-15. By targeting the teaching of softer skills at these ages, pupils have the best chance to become great citizens and contribute to society, rather than focusing on purely achieving exam results. Schools and businesses have a definitive role to play in helping students develop and present their soft skills, including teamwork, self-management and communications skills. The CBI has produced guidelines for businesses to engage with primary schools and early years to support businesses to increase their involvement in the primary sector.
- 2.9 A comprehensive approach to the development of a curriculum for life and employment supports other Manchester strategies, including the Children and Young People's Plan and the Family Poverty Strategy which both promote the importance of building resilience in children and young people.

3. Current picture in Manchester

- 3.1 "Our Manchester - The Manchester Strategy" was launched in 2016 following extensive consultation with residents across the city. One of the key themes that emerged from the conversation was the focus on a highly skilled city. It identified that "*schools also have a wider role to play in instilling confidence and aspiration, social literacy and a culture of respect, preparing young people for the workplace and indeed for life. It is vital to help them to develop into confident young adults with the drive and the social, communication and critical thinking skills they need to succeed*". A curriculum for life and employment therefore sits at the centre of the future ambitions for the city.
- 3.2 Given its position as a non-statutory, non-examined subject, schools are free to develop their own PSHE curriculum. While national guidelines do exist for specific elements, and the government has recently announced its intention to make relationship and sex education compulsory, there are no local or national guidelines about the coordinated content that could be applied to a curriculum for life.

⁴ Almlund, M., Duckworth, A., Heckman, J. and Kautz, T. (2011) 'Personality psychology and economics.' In E. Hanushek, S. Machin, and L. Woessmann (eds.), Handbook of the Economics of Education, vol. 4. Amsterdam: North-Holland.

⁵ The Guardian (2011) "Why character skills are crucial in early years education"
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/may/20/character-skills-early-years-education>

3.3 PSHE in schools across the city is, however, variable in both the amount delivered and in the level of quality. There is inconsistency in how in how schools in different parts of the city draw on the assets (both physical and human), and also how these assets are made available to schools in different areas. Manchester City Council (MCC) continues to support and drive the improvement of the careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) across the city. However, the provision and buy-in of a full offer by secondary schools is also variable with most of our schools committed to and recognising the importance of CEIAG but the time and resource commitment variable across schools. That said, there is a lot of good practice in individual and groups of schools in Manchester, as well as with employers and partner organisations. While it is not possible to list all the activity that is currently taking place across the city, examples include:

- Workplace experience
- Business engagement with local schools
- Healthy Schools Manchester
- Collapsed timetable days

3.4 The Manchester Youth Council has also conducted its own research into the curriculum for life. At a recent Voice Box meeting that brings school councils together, Manchester Youth Council members asked young people to identify and rank the subjects they would most value in a curriculum for life. Financial education was first followed by politics, career education and Sex Relationships Education.

3.5 Research evidence suggests that resources and capacity to deliver a comprehensive curriculum for life and employment is limited in schools due to budget constraints and training for teachers. However, there is a definite role for all education providers starting with nurseries and early years. A curriculum for life and employment would be most effective if delivered as part of a wider partnership with parents, employers, and the wider community. Beyond schools, the Youth Council also believes that youth services also have an important role in delivering a wide range of topics that support the personal and social development of young people, and that this should be seen as part of the wider Early Help offer.

4. What could a curriculum for life and employment look like, and how can it be supported in the city?

4.1 A curriculum for life and employment would co-ordinate the different elements of PSHE education into a single framework document that can act as a guide for schools. The curriculum should be designed and delivered with partners including children, young people, school leavers, schools, parents, employers and wider stakeholders. A framework will also provide a medium through which to share good practice, knowledge and assets between educational establishments, employers and young people.

4.2 We know that there is lots of capacity across the city in the form of employers, schools and communities, who will be able to contribute to the effective

delivery of a curriculum for life and employment. Young people in Manchester should feel that they are growing up in a city which values and supports them to start well, and equips them with the skills to live well and age well in the city.

- 4.3 The first draft of a proposed curriculum for life and employment is attached as appendix to this paper. The framework is intended to:
- Articulate the key skills and knowledge that form part of a curriculum for life and employment.
 - Articulate the role of the curriculum from early years through to key-stage 5.
 - Co-ordinate and build on the different elements of existing PSHE education to help pupils to stay safe, promote their physical and emotional health and develop the character, resilience and skills they need to succeed academically and in the workplace.
 - Articulate the cross cutting themes and the enablers necessary for the success of the curriculum.
- 4.4 The themes included within the draft are based on good practice research (including academic research), the themes identified by the North West Youth Forum and discussions with a number of individuals involved in this area. The research identified a number of key themes:
- Skills for Employment
 - Relationships
 - Self-management
 - Health
 - Citizenship
- 4.5 The document aims to capture the “softer skills” identified in the academic literature, as well as the more practical skills and knowledge that are needed to prepare young people for adulthood. Each of the framework themes is broken down into a number of more detailed headings which build up over the various key stages as young people develop and mature so they can deal with more complex issues / concepts.
- 4.6 Each area for the draft curriculum is underpinned by a number of crosscutting themes. Health and wellbeing links skills and good quality employment to healthy life, and key aspects of the curriculum for life and employment such as improving understanding of domestic violence and abuse and sexual health are key elements of improving children’s public health. Emotional intelligence - being able to read non verbal communication - is identified as one of the key non-cognitive skills that young people need to succeed beyond the education system. Resilience will make sure young people are equipped with the ability to adapt in the face of disadvantages at an early age. Finally, digital literacy will underpin everything in the future. These four enablers will need to cut across each of the identified themes and be built upon at each key stage to support the success of the curriculum for life and employment.

- 4.7 In order to enable the success of a curriculum for life and employment, however, space and capacity will need to be created within the system. This is unlikely to be financial in the first instance, but more likely around creating time and prioritising its development. This will be needed from professional and academic levels but also through engaging with young people to identify what they feel is needed. This in particular will be critical to the success of a curriculum - if it is not relevant to the needs of young people, then it misses the key criterion.
- 4.8 Continuing to work across organisations and sectors will also be necessary. This already happens in areas - the work of Healthy Schools Manchester in building a collaborative platform between health services, schools and the Council is a prime example of where this has been successful - but this type of work will need to continue to expand and become the norm in order for the curriculum for life and employment to succeed.
- 4.9 It will also be necessary to leverage the assets in neighbourhoods across the city to support this work. Evidence has shown that businesses are willing to be involved in supporting young people to develop the right skills, and there are a wealth of community assets across the city able to assist. The framework will provide a platform to help make this offer more consistent across the city as well as to help identify capacity and tools to deliver the work.


5. Our Manchester

- 5.1 Evidence shows that a curriculum for life and employment needs to be co-produced with a variety of stakeholders including schools, pupils, parents, voluntary sector organisations and employers. This approach to designing the curriculum ensures that it is what is needed rather than what we think should be delivered to young people, and supports the Our Manchester approach. Using this approach provides a real opportunity for schools to be creative in how they deliver education and training.
- 5.2 The Our Manchester approach also provides an opportunity for young people to play an active part in developing a curriculum that suits their needs. Research indicated that some of the most successful programmes were those where young people had the opportunity to influence and develop the curriculum alongside educators. Our Manchester, alongside a curriculum for life and employment, will also support our young people to become good citizens through an understanding of the local political economy and the importance of community, diversity and community.

6. Recommendations


- 6.1 This report has outlined a proposed draft framework for a curriculum for life and employment, which is intended to provide stimulate further discussion. Members are requested to note the content of this report and to provide comments on the broad approach and framework.

Curriculum for Life and Employment

	Early Years (age 2-3) Pre School	Upper Foundation and KS1 (age 3-7)	KS2 (age 7-11) Build on KS1	KS3 (age 11-14) Build on KS1/2	
 <p>Health & wellbeing / emotional intelligence and resilience / digital literacy</p>	Skills for Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVs Interview skills Self promotion How to find a job Knowledge and ambition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you want to do? Why do people go to work? Why is work important? How to be an enterprising individual How to work as a team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What jobs are out there and what's realistic? What do you need to do to get to your dream job? Experiencing the world of work – "work comes to school" days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self confidence How to find a job How to get experience (e.g. volunteering) Self awareness of softer skills Resilience
	Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy relationships Safe sex Social media Pornography Personal safety Family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friendships – importance of sharing Who are my family and friends? Stranger danger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of family and acknowledging different families Friendships Respecting other people Respecting yourself Who to talk to if you're not comfortable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media / online safety Self esteem and peer pressure Bullying Respecting consent Recognising abuse Understanding others Gender and Sexuality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy relationships Consent, sex and the law Pornography (& context) Social media / online safety Trolling / cyber bullying DVA
	Self-management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial management Routine / motivation Expectation of adulthood Sustainable living & environmental awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early years model "Being willing to have a go" What is money? Use what they know to learn new things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basics of savings Recycling Keeping your neighbourhood tidy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgeting Using a bank account Time management (homework, self organisation etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic financial awareness Self reliance (looking after yourself) Personal safety Motivation & routine (doing something!) – incl timekeeping
	Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health Sexual health Drugs, alcohol and tobacco Emotional resilience Personal hygiene / body image Nutrition Physical activity / exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eating healthy Moving around (exercise) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being comfortable in yourself – everyone is different Being clean is important Importance of eating healthy foods and exercising Medicine safety Getting enough sleep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Puberty – emotional, physical, hygiene Importance of healthy eating and exercising Mindfulness Active travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pregnancy options Contraception and STIs Emotional health and well being Who to see if you're ill Hygiene Drugs and alcohol Body image (incl advertising)
	Citizenship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voting Political engagement Community / cohesion "The Good Mancunian" 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are your neighbours? What is your neighbourhood like? How can you make it better? Being free from prejudice and discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are our leaders / what do they do? Why does diversity improve a community? Basics of voting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is a good Mancunian? Mutual community support (OM) Government structures What is a manifesto How to have a debate Active citizenship Social action

Each stage builds on earlier ones – strengthening the same topics and making them relevant to the individual as they mature

Curriculum for Life and Employment

	KS4 (age 14-16) Build on KS1/2/3	KS5 (age 16-18) Build on KS1/2/3/4	Young Adults (age 18-25)	
 <p>Health & wellbeing / emotional intelligence and resilience / digital literacy</p>	Skills for Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVs Interview skills Self promotion How to find a job Knowledge and ambition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing your CV Interview skills (STAR) Self promotion Thinking on your feet Understanding a JD. Access to business mentors Good quality work experience Information on the local labour market opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competencies Career pathways Further education Higher education Vocational Learning Good quality schools led career advice Information and advice on locally available apprenticeships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Progression Career paths Adult learning
	Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy relationships Safe sex Social media Pornography Personal safety Family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy relationships including DVA, coercive control Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence Female Genital Mutilation All link to I Matter safeguarding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consent Healthy relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships and marriage Parenting
	Self-management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial management Routine / motivation Expectation of adulthood Sustainable living & environmental awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgeting Bank statements Household management Living sustainably Managing stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rent / mortgages Building independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgeting and Planning, Savings & Investment tools – Moneysavingexpert.com Shopping and consumer rights Income and taxes
	Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health Sexual health Drugs, alcohol and tobacco Emotional resilience Personal hygiene / body image Nutrition Physical activity / exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasons for sex - are you ready? Contraception and STIs Understanding anxiety and depression Self harm and suicide prevention Drugs and alcohol All link to I Matter safeguarding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing your own health Self harm and suicide prevention Drugs and alcohol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual health Mental and physical health
	Citizenship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voting Political engagement Community / cohesion "The Good Mancunian" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active citizenship (practical) Class debates Elections & decisions Online propaganda and extremist groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing your views Public speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting involved

Each stage builds on earlier ones – strengthening the same topics and making them relevant to the individual as they mature