

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 2 January 2018
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.

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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 and is the third of twice yearly reports to this Committee, with reports being submitted to Scrutiny Committees at their June and January meetings from now on.

2. Executive Member for Children's Services - Portfolio

As Executive Member for Children's Services, my areas of responsibility are Children's Social Care and Early Years.

Key initiatives or current pieces of work include:-

- Attend Children's Board to oversee all matters relating to children in Manchester and help deliver 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, the Health and Well Being Board and discussed with children and young people. The plan and 'plan on a page' version are now printed and being distributed amongst partners and frontline staff.

The main focus is on the 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 fulfil their potential

3. Progress and Outcomes June 2017- January 2018

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Manchester Children's Social Care was rated Inadequate by OFSTED in 2014 and has been on an improvement journey. I have worked 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,

My main focus has been to work to prepare for the OFSTED re-inspection of Children's Services which took place between the 9th October and 2nd November 2017. Details of the OFSTED inspection are elsewhere on this agenda.

Children's Services are now judged as no longer Inadequate, but Requires Improvement to be Good. Outcomes for care leavers and looked after children also Require Improvement to be Good. Adoption, and Leadership and Management are rated Good.

This is a significant improvement in Manchester's Children's Services but we are still on an improvement journey to get all services for children rated Good.

In order to achieve this I have undertaken the following actions:-

- Met 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 referrals, Early Help, MASH, frontline social work, caseloads, audits, fostering and adoption, LAC numbers and outcomes, workforce issues and budgets.
- Monthly analysis of the scorecard to check progress on key indicators and challenge where progress is not being made swiftly enough. Ensure that remedial action is being taken.
- Attended monthly Improvement Board meetings with officers from Children's Services and other partners. Met regularly with the Chair to discuss areas of concern.
- Attended bi-monthly meeting of the Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board. Met with the Chair regularly and discussed 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. Recently attended meetings to discuss Serious Case Reviews and the learning gained from these and how it will be distributed throughout services.
- £10 million investment in Children's Services has been used to recruit 84 social workers and 14 managers.

This has reduced caseloads and is improving the quality of social work. Caseloads are now at an average of 19 for social workers and 17 for newly

qualified social workers. OFSTED have indicated that newly qualified social workers' caseloads should reduce further.

The investment was predicated on more effective management oversight of cases, regular supervision for all staff and better outcome in audits.

- I Chair the Corporate Parenting Panel, which is a multi-agency meeting that oversees outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
- The meeting focusses on the LAC strategy and improving outcomes.
- The Panel meets with Looked After Children and Care Leavers to discuss health, education and accommodation.
- We are focussed on increasing the number of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Looked After Children.
- We have ensured that post 16s LAC now have PEPs including those Not in Education, Employment or Training
- I have visited Children's Services offices to get the views of frontline staff and discussed caseloads, supervision and the implementation of Signs of Safety and how the strength based approach can support families more effectively.
- I have attended staff briefings with the Director and spoken with staff about Our Manchester, Signs of Safety, caseloads and budgets.
- Attended Regional and Greater Manchester events for Lead Members. Manchester is collaborating with other authorities in Greater Manchester on a number of workstreams including reducing LAC by 20%, schools, youth justice and complex safeguarding issues.
- Adoption rates have improved and children are adopted in a more timely way. Manchester is now part of a Regional Adoption Agency with Trafford, Stockport and Cheshire East.
- Number of Looked After Children had safely reduced to 1,136 (as of 2nd June) compared to 1,165 at the end of last year. LAC numbers have increased slightly in recent months and are currently at 1,207.
- Last year saw an increase in the number of LAC attaining in their GCSEs including English and maths. The aim is to improve attainment this year and see LAC attaining more in line with their peers.

EARLY YEARS

- Ensuring 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 and some children can access 30 hours of provision.

- Some two year olds can now access 15 hours of provision. From September 2017 all children of working parents can access 30 hours of free provision.
- We have been able to meet this need in Manchester with a combination of school nurseries and private, independent and voluntary provision. Parents need to register on the D of E website to see if they qualify for the 30 hours. If they qualify they can access a code which they pass to the school to secure the funding.
- Delivering 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; this is provided by health visitors until the child starts school.
- Visiting nursery schools and nursery settings as regularly as possible.

Although I take the political lead in all these areas, all achievements are a result of collective efforts. It would not be possible to improve the lives of children and young people in Manchester without 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. Thank you for your contribution.