

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2018

Present:

Councillor Reid – in the Chair

Councillors Sameem Ali [CYP/18/07 - CYP/18/11], Alijah, Cooley, Hewitson, T Judge, Lovecy, K Simcock [CYP/18/05 - CYP/18/09] and Stone

Co-opted Voting Members:

Mr A Arogundade, Parent Governor Representative

Ms M Neall, Parent Governor Representative

Ms Z Stepan, Parent Governor Representative

Mrs B Kellner, Representative of the Diocese of Manchester

Mrs J Miles, Representative of the Diocese of Salford

Co-opted Non Voting Members:

Mr R Lammas, Primary sector teacher representative

Mr L Duffy, Secondary sector teacher representative [CYP/18/07 - CYP/18/11]

Councillor S Newman, Executive Member for Children's Services

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure

Councillor Flanagan, Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

Councillor Sheikh, Assistant Executive Member for Children's Services

Councillor Ollerhead, Chair of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

Apologies:

Councillors Collins, Madeleine Monaghan and Taylor

CYP/18/05 Minutes

Councillor K Simcock informed Members that she was the Director of Programme at the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace and requested that the minutes from the previous meeting be amended to reflect her correct job title.

Decisions

1. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 2 January 2018, subject to the above amendment.
2. To receive the minutes of the Ofsted Subgroup meeting held on 16 January 2018.

CYP/18/06 Membership of the Ofsted Subgroup

A Member who was also the Chair of the Ofsted Subgroup requested that Councillor Lovecy be added to the membership of the Ofsted Subgroup, to which the Committee agreed.

Decision

To add Councillor Lovecy to the membership of the Ofsted Subgroup.

CYP/18/07 Updated Financial Strategy and Directorate Budget and Business Plans 2018-2020

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive and the City Treasurer which provided Members with an update on the Council's financial position and set out the next steps in the budget process, including scrutiny of the draft Budget proposals and Directorate Budget and Business Plan reports and accompanying Delivery Plans by this Committee.

The Committee received and considered the Children's Services and Education Budget and Business Planning 2018 to 2020 and the Children's Services Delivery Plans 2018 to 2020.

The Committee had been invited to comment on these reports prior to their submission to the Executive on 7 February 2018.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- That the Directorate's Budget and Business Plan included good examples of innovative approaches, in the face of financial challenges;
- Concerns about increasing child poverty;
- Questioning why Children's Services and Schools were split across the remit of two Executive Members and emphasising the importance of joint working between Education and other areas of Children's Services (for example, in addressing the reasons a child was excluded from school);
- The role of Early Help, schools' experiences of Early Help Hubs and a request to visit an Early Help Hub; and
- How the budget for external foster care placements could be reduced.

The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources advised that the remit of the Executive Members was decided by the Leader and that the decision had been taken to remove Schools from the remit of the Executive Member for Children's Services, due to the heavy workload of this role. He advised that he would raise Members' concerns with the Leader. In response to concerns about a delayed response from an Early Help Hub, the Strategic Director of Children's Services requested that the Member provide him with the specific details outside of the meeting so that he could look into this. The Strategic Director informed Members that the Directorate was working to safely reduce the number of LAC and provide permanence for children, for example, through the use of Special Guardianship Orders and that this would reduce the amount spent on foster care placements. The Executive Member for Children's Services added that the Council was also working to place more children with internal foster carers, which was cheaper and achieved better outcomes. The Strategic Director added that the Council had enhanced its offer to internal foster carers to improve recruitment and was now making fewer placements with external foster carers. A Member, who was also a Member of the Fostering Panel, advised that support, not just financial rewards, was important to

foster carers and she was aware of a number of foster carers who had moved from fostering via an external agency to fostering with the Council because they had heard that the Council now provided good support to its foster carers.

Decisions

1. To endorse the recommendation to the Executive that:

Executive is recommended to approve the final proposals in this report and that these are included in the budget to Council.

2. To request that a visit to an Early Help Hub be arranged from Members of the Committee.

CYP/18/08 Dedicated Schools Grant 2018/19

The Committee received a report of the Head of Finance for Adult Services Directorate and Children's Services Directorate which provided the confirmed Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation announced by the Department for Education (DfE) on the 19 December 2017 and outlined the budget across individual school budgets (ISB) and local authority retained schools budget (RSB).

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:

- The National Funding Formula (NFF);
- The local authority area level DSG 2018/19 settlement; and
- Grant allocation across schools, providers and centrally retained.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Discussion of the implementation of NFF, including that primary legislation was needed before the 'hard' formula could be implemented, which was planned for 2020/21;
- Concern about the budget pressures on the High Needs Block as, while it had increased this year, it had been frozen for a number of years before this;
- Concerns that some families were not claiming Free Schools Meals (FSM) because they found the process too complicated;
- Concerns about eligibility for FSM and the Pupil Premium under Universal Credit, if the proposals the government was consulting on were introduced; and
- Concerns that working parents were not claiming the additional 15 free hours of the three and four year old entitlement and the impact if the DfE decided to claw back this money from the Early Years Block.

The Chair suggested that Committee Members considered observing a meeting of the Schools Funding Forum, noting that the next meeting was on 5 March 2018. The Director of Education outlined how the Council was using capital investment from the government to create additional school places for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and advised that this would enable the Council to reduce the use of expensive independent placements outside of Manchester. She

advised that independent post-16 education for children with SEND was also a significant cost. She reported that the Council was working with secondary special schools to look at how they could create different places for post-16 education for young people with SEND which would be more cost effective. The Directorate Finance Lead informed Members about software schools could purchase to check if a child was eligible for FSM. The Executive Member for Children's Services informed Members that most Manchester schools already offered free nursery provision for three and four-year-olds so parents did not see the point of registering with the DfE; however, she advised that schools were encouraging them to do this as it provided the school with additional funding.

Decisions

1. To note the 2018/19 individual schools budgets (ISB) and local authority retained school budgets (RSB) determined from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation.
2. To note Members' concerns regarding the budget pressures on the High Needs Block, the possible clawback of funding from the Early Years Block and the proposed changes on eligibility for Free Schools Meals, including the effect on the Pupil Premium.

CYP/18/09 Update on National School Absence Half Terms 1-4 2016/17

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education which provided an update on school absence for Autumn and Spring terms 2016/17 following publication of national absence figures by the Department for Education in November 2017 and also provided an update on statutory action used to support schools in addressing absence. This report was previously submitted to the Committee's meeting on 5 December 2017 and was included on this meeting's agenda to give Members the opportunity to discuss it in more detail.

Officers referred to the main themes and points within the report which included:

- Overall absence data;
- Persistent absence data;
- Comparisons with other local authorities; and
- Statutory action.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Recognition of the hard work of schools and officers in the improvement of school attendance in Manchester in recent years;
- That children who were home schooled or awaiting a school place were not included in the figures;
- The use of flexi-schooling and a request for further information on this in a future report;
- The challenges for primary schools which received new arrivals in Year 6 through the Primary In Year Fair Access Protocol;
- Whether truancy sweeps were still being carried out; and

- Recognition of the impact being a young carer could have on school attendance and the importance of young carers being identified and supported.

The Director of Education informed Members that, while children who were being home schooled were not included in the figures, the Council had a robust monitoring policy for elective home education. She also informed the Committee that truancy sweeps were still being carried out using a multi-agency approach and that Members were welcome to take part. The Executive Member for Children's Services shared an experience of flexi-schooling at a school in her ward. She informed Members about the Young Carers Strategy and that some secondary schools had set up Young Carers Forums.

Decisions

1. To receive a further report at an appropriate time to include information on the use of flexi-schooling in Manchester and on children who are not included in the school attendance figures because they are waiting for a school place or are being home schooled.
2. To receive a report on young carers at a future meeting.

CYP/18/10 Post Ofsted Improvement Plan

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Director of Children's Services which identified the need for a short life "Delivering Excellence Getting to Good Board" and the priorities for the work of that Board, following Ofsted's re-inspection of Manchester's children's services.

Officers referred to the main themes and points within the report which included:

- The strategic and operational boards and groups responsible for the oversight, governance and delivery of continued improvements;
- The themes which the Getting to Good Board would focus on; and
- The proxy indicators which would be developed in order to measure success against these themes.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- The Working Together to Safeguard Children consultation which had taken place between October and December 2017;
- What arrangements were being made to replace the Strategic Lead for Children's Social Care, who had recently left the Council; and
- That the action plan developed in response to the Ofsted re-inspection report would be considered at the meeting of the Ofsted Subgroup on 20 March 2018 and that all Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee were welcome to attend this meeting.

The Strategic Director of Children's Services outlined the focus of the Working Together to Safeguard Children consultation and informed Members that the

Manchester Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) had responded to the consultation as the lead agency on behalf of all the partner organisations. He advised that new guidance on working together should be available in April or May 2018. The Executive Member for Children's Services highlighted the Getting to Good Board's third theme, which related to the work of the MSCB, and informed Members that Edwina Grant OBE was producing a discussion paper on future arrangements for working together to safeguard children and suggested that the Committee consider this at a future meeting. The Strategic Director advised that, to improve locality working and partnership working, a new management model was being trialled, replacing the Strategic Lead for Children's Social Care with three Heads of Locality for North, Central and South.

Decisions

1. To request that the Committee consider Edwina Grant's discussion paper on future arrangements for working together to safeguard children at a future meeting.
2. To receive an update on the progress and impact of the Getting to Good Board and its priorities at a future meeting.

CYP/18/11 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 note the report and approve the work programme.