

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 7 December 2022

Present:

Councillor Reid – in the Chair

Councillors Alijah, Amin, Bano, Cooley, Gartside, Lovecy, Sadler and Sharif Mahamed

Co-opted Voting Members:

Mr G Cleworth, Parent Governor Representative

Co-opted Non-Voting Members:

Ms L Smith, Primary Sector Teacher Representative

Also present:

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children Services

Kim Stevenson, Nursery in the Park

Apologies:

Councillors Abdullatif, Hewitson, Johnson and Judge

Miss S Iltaf, Secondary Sector Teacher Representative

Canon S Mapledoram, Representative of the Diocese of Manchester

CYP/22/57 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2022.

CYP/22/58 Youth, Play & Participation Service (YPPS) Grants Framework 1st July 2023 to 31st March 2025

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods which followed on from the update on the Youth and Play Commissioning Arrangements which was presented to Executive on 20 October 2021. The report to Executive set out an alternative delivery model to be designed and developed following the decision to transfer responsibility for commissioning from Young Manchester. The purpose of this report was to provide the Committee with the outcome from the design and development work and to set out the proposed Youth, Play and Participation Service's commissioning process and framework including timescales for the implementation of the proposed new arrangements. The Committee was invited to comment on the report before its submission to the Executive on 14 December 2022.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Strategic national and local context;
- Principles of investment;
- Governance and decision-making processes;

- Funding;
- Timeline;
- Service requirements;
- Quality assurance, impact and monitoring;
- Other considerations; and
- Next steps.

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

- Support for this approach;
- How would it be ensured that the young people's advisory panel was representative;
- Suggesting that schools and parents could be engaged with to reach young people whose voices were not currently being heard and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND);
- Ensuring that families and young people were aware of the activities which were available for them;
- Communication between the Ward Councillors selected to be part of the district Members' Advisory Panels and other Ward Councillors in the district; and
- Smaller community groups who did not have experience in or confidence to bid for grants but who were doing good work in their local community and how they could be supported to bid for funding and to adapt and grow to meet the needs of the area.

The Head of the Youth, Play and Participation Service reported that work was taking place to develop and expand young people's participation, including around decision-making and service provision, by his own team, working with Children and Education Services colleagues, and by upskilling the sector. He stated that, when decisions were being made about district-based youth provision, young people from that district should be involved in the decisions. He advised that the details of how this would work were still being fully developed and that more information would be provided in a future report. He reported that there had been a good uptake of the Youth Investment Fund from small grassroots organisations, including ones which were Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)-led, and that officers would be looking at how this could be expanded. He stated that they would also be looking at how smaller organisations could access the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme funding. He agreed that communicating the offer to children and young people was important and advised that funded projects would be expected to publicise their offer and that his team would be working with neighbourhood teams, and with other colleagues and partner organisations, to communicate what was available in the local area. In response to a Member's question about opportunities for new Councillors to learn more about what was going on in their ward and to engage with this work, he advised that he would be open to any invitations to meet with Ward Councillors in their ward. He asked Members to let him know of any local groups they were aware of which were doing good work with young people in their area and to help to promote initiatives that they could be involved in such as HAF and workforce development opportunities. In response to a Member's question about the

statistics from the census, he advised that they were looking at this and would provide an update at a later date.

The Executive Member for Children's Services referred to areas of the city, particularly in north Manchester, from where fewer applications for funding were received and work which was taking place to address this. He advised that Member involvement would be an important part of the new process as he felt that this had been an area of weakness previously. He asked Members to let him know if they were interested in being on one of the district Member panels and advised that he was also arranging meetings for all Ward Councillors to enable them to give their views.

The Chair advised that it was important to audit this work very quickly, including identifying any gaps, for example BAME-led groups. She expressed concern that applications would be predominantly for youth provision rather than play activities for younger children and advised that it was important to encourage groups which provided play activities for younger children to apply for funding and to ensure that any gaps identified were addressed. However, subject to these comments, she reported that she was happy with the direction that this work was taking.

Decision

To support the direction of the work taking place, subject to Members' comments.

[Councillor Alijah declared a personal interest as the Chair of the Hideaway Youth Project]

[Councillor Reid and Councillor Lovecy declared a personal interest as members of the Members' Advisory Panel for their district]

CYP/22/59 Post-16 EET Strategic Plan 2022-25

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Education which provided an update on work done by the Council to increase the number of young people accessing EET (education, employment or training) opportunities in the city, aligning with the city's economic priorities. It also outlined the plans for this work moving forwards, with the strategic plan developed to coincide with the Our Manchester Forward to 2025 Strategy and Manchester Inclusion Strategy 2022-25. The paper highlighted the challenges the city would have in ensuring sufficiency of places for young people wanting to continue in education due to the growth of the school population. It outlined the work that had been done to date including promoting opportunities for post 16 providers to access capital funding through bids to the Department for Education (DFE) and actively encouraging the submission of applications to open new provision through the free school process.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Post-16 provision;
- Young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET);
- The Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI);
- Post-16 EET Strategic Action Plan 2022-25; and

- Governance.

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

- Support for vulnerable young people;
- The resources needed for the expansion of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects;
- Post-16 education for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND);
- To request that Wythenshawe councillors be briefed on what was going on in their area; and
- Careers advice including for girls and young people who were less academic.

The Director of Education reported that STEM was one of the most in-demand areas where work was having to take place to try to increase capacity, whereas demand for subjects such as modern foreign languages and history was reducing. The Post-16 Lead informed Members that Manchester College had invested significantly in upgrading its facilities for STEM subjects in recent years and that other providers had put in bids for funding to improve their facilities. In response to a question about additional staffing that would be needed for the expansion of STEM subjects, the Director of Education stated that this was not something which had been raised by the post-16 settings.

The Director of Education advised Members that there was a strong post-16 sector for pupils with SEND, with most special schools having a sixth form, a strong offer from mainstream providers such as Manchester College and Loreto College and supported internships. She encouraged Members to visit one of the special schools' sixth forms. She informed Members about an event which had taken place recently with businesses about employing more young people with SEND.

In response to a question about vulnerable young people, the Post-16 Lead outlined work to identify, in conjunction with schools, young people who were at risk of becoming NEET and to work collaboratively across teams and with partners to address this. He informed Members about the post-16 steering group, which included a range of stakeholders, including the Virtual School, Youth Justice, Care Leavers and EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan) Teams, contributing to an action plan for targeted support, and the introduction of NEET prevention panels which provided an opportunity for schools to get advice and put early intervention strategies in place. He reported that approaches to careers advice varied across schools and post-16 settings, with some schools having their own in-house career services and some commissioning a service. He reported that the Council used Career Connect, which worked to prevent young people becoming NEET. He informed Members how his team was working with the Work and Skills Team on the quality assurance of school career services and about work to encourage targeted groups, such as girls, into areas in which they were under-represented. In response to a Member's question, he outlined some of the support available to young people who wanted to start their own business.

In response to a comment from the Chair about young people travelling across local authority boundaries for post-16 provision, the Director of Education reported that the Council had commissioned a sufficiency report which had looked at the number of young people coming into and going out of the city to access post-16 provision. In response to a question from the Chair, she informed Members about Manchester College's work to rationalise its buildings, improving the facilities and modernising their offer. She suggested that Members could visit their facilities, in the city centre or at Openshaw.

The Chair suggested that the government should provide funding for more secondary schools to expand to include their own sixth form and that Members should lobby the government about funding for post-16 places. She advised that the issue of pay in Further Education needed to be addressed. She expressed concern that the entry requirements for T Level qualifications would exclude some young people. She requested that a more detailed report be provided to a future meeting, including utilising social value, changes in the number of places available at Manchester College, whether Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES) could be utilised more and information from the sufficiency report which had looked across the Greater Manchester area.

Decision

To request a more detailed report at a future meeting, including utilising social value, changes in the number of places available at Manchester College, whether Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES) can be utilised more and information from the sufficiency report looking across the Greater Manchester area.

CYP/22/60 Attainment Headline outcomes 2022 (provisional)

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Education which provided a summary of the 2022 provisional outcomes of statutory assessment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. The report described how outcomes for children in the primary phase had declined nationally as a result of the pandemic and that the impact in Manchester was far more significant than elsewhere especially for younger children who had missed out on most of their early years and were now in year 1. The report concluded with a list of actions which were being progressed to address some of the gaps in learning including a proposal for additional support to year 1 cohorts in some of schools in the most deprived areas of the city.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Headline outcomes based on provisional performance data for 2022 for:
 - Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS);
 - Year 1 Phonics Test;
 - Key Stage 1;
 - Key Stage 2;
 - Key Stage 4; and
 - Key Stage 5; and
- Next steps.

The Executive Member for Children's Services drew Member's attention to a letter he had written to the Education Secretary, highlighting the impact of the pandemic on younger children in the city, and warned of the negative consequences if this was not addressed.

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

- To support the Executive Member's comments about the importance of taking action to address the impact of the pandemic on children;
- How to support children in the areas that they had fallen behind in during the pandemic without reducing time spent on play, which was also important to their development; and
- Recognising the hard work of Manchester teachers and other school staff, the ongoing challenges facing them and that the impact on children from not being in school demonstrated what an important difference schools made to children's development.

The Assistant Director of Education reported that the response from the national government to addressing the learning debt from the pandemic had focused on tuition; however, she advised that very young children had a deficit of social interaction, were not ready for sitting and learning and needed to do a lot of play and have a rich language environment. She reported that Manchester schools were responding to this by adapting the curriculum for the younger age groups, looking at where the gaps were for their pupils and responding to that. She advised that neither Ofsted nor the Council's Quality Assurance Team would support forcing children into learning activities which they were not yet ready for.

The Director of Education expressed concern that the impact of the pandemic on children would be forgotten as there was no quick solution to this and it would need sustained effort over a number of years, particularly for younger children. She reported that different age groups appeared to have responded differently, with children in Reception and Year 1 being very lively and not ready to sit and learn but with younger children who had been born in lockdown and were now going into nursery tending to be quiet and passive, so different approaches would be needed.

The Chair drew Members' attention to information she had circulated from the FFT Education Data Lab on attainment at Key Stage 1 following the pandemic. She advised that the pandemic had had the most impact on more deprived areas, in particular in the north-west. She suggested that research could be done through one of the universities. She reported that the validated attainment data would come back to the Committee. She highlighted the effects that the pandemic had had on babies and young children and how family circumstances had impacted the effect it had on children, for example, whether parents had the time and the academic ability to support their children's learning. She requested that the Committee receive a further, more detailed report at an appropriate time on how schools were progressing with this work.

Decisions

1. To note that the Committee will receive the validated attainment data when this is available.
2. To request a further, more detailed report at an appropriate time on how schools are progressing with work to address the impact of the pandemic on children's learning.

CYP/22/61 An update on the structural condition surveys for Council-owned Early Years buildings and future works

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Education, following on from a report which went to Executive in June 2021 which approved £3m capital to be spent on priority safety work for Council owned Early Years buildings, many of which were also used to provide daycare for children. This report provided an update on the structural condition surveys for these Council-owned Early Years (EYs) buildings and the development of a priority capital works programme which would lead to the inclusion of these buildings in the Asset Management Programme (AMP). In addition, there was an update on the progress made on reviewing lease arrangements for the private day care providers which occupied these buildings and the ongoing management of the early years estate.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Main issues;
- Priority capital spend on the Early Years estate 2022/23;
- Phase 2 Early Years estate capital priorities 2023/24; and
- Review of tendered daycare leases.

Kim Stevenson from Nursery in the Park stated that her site had been selected for improvement work and that she wanted more information on what was proposed for her building, stating that energy efficiency, in particular insulation, was important, along with building repairs. The Executive Member for Children's Services reported that the priorities for the works on Early Years buildings included making them safe and improving energy efficiency. He suggested that Ms Stevenson meet with the Lead for Statutory Area Early Years Access and Sufficiency to discuss proposals for her building, advising that he could also attend the meeting, if that would be helpful.

In response to a Member's question about the closure of Moss Side Children's Centre, the Director of Education advised that the costs of bringing the building to an acceptable standard would have used almost the whole capital allocation for this work, that there was sufficient daycare provision within that area and that other services which had previously been delivered from that location had been re-located to an alternative site. She reported that the Council had worked with the daycare provider which had been based in that building to facilitate them moving to an alternative building. In response to a question about the future use of the vacant building, she advised that this was now within Corporate Property's portfolio but that she could ask them to speak to the Member, who was also a Ward Councillor for Moss Side, about the future use of the site.

In response to questions from the Chair, the Executive Member for Children's Services advised that this work was an ongoing process, that there were further issues to be considered and that the Committee could expect to hear more about this in future.

Decision

To note the report.

CYP/22/62 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.

The Chair of the Ofsted Subgroup invited additional Members to join the Subgroup.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme.