

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday, 6 March 2024

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Council Chamber, Level 2, Town Hall Extension

Everyone is welcome to attend this committee meeting.

There will be a private meeting for Committee Members only at 9.30 am in the Council Antechamber.

Access to the Public Gallery

Access to the Public Gallery is on Level 3 of the Town Hall Extension, using the lift or stairs in the lobby of the Mount Street entrance to the Extension. There is no public access from any other entrance.

Filming and broadcast of the meeting

Meetings of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee are 'webcast'. These meetings are filmed and broadcast live on the Internet. If you attend this meeting you should be aware that you might be filmed and included in that transmission.

Membership of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Councillors -

Reid (Chair), N Ali, Alijah, Amin, Bano, Bell, Fletcher, Gartside, Hewitson, Judge, Lovecy, Ludford, Marsh, McHale, Muse, Nunney, Sadler and Sharif Mahamed

Co-opted Members -

Mr G Cleworth, Ms S Davies, Canon S Mapledoram, Mrs J Miles, Ms L Smith and Mr Y Yonis

Agenda

1. Urgent Business

To consider any items which the Chair has agreed to have submitted as urgent.

2. Appeals

To consider any appeals from the public against refusal to allow inspection of background documents and/or the inclusion of items in the confidential part of the agenda.

3. Interests

6.

To allow Members an opportunity to [a] declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in any items which appear on this agenda; and [b] record any items from which they are precluded from voting as a result of Council Tax/Council rent arrears; [c] the existence and nature of party whipping arrangements in respect of any item to be considered at this meeting. Members with a personal interest should declare that at the start of the item under consideration. If Members also have a prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest they must withdraw from the meeting during the consideration of the item.

4. Minutes Pages To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held 7 - 16

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2024.

To follow

5. SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Annual Report

To follow

7. Manchester Sensory Support Service Commission Report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

Child Friendly City Update

Pages 17 - 28

This report is an update to a previous paper brought forward in March 2022 in which Executive gave approval for officers to identify a future provider for Manchester Sensory Support Service through an open tender process. This process has now been completed and the contract for this service has been awarded to Big Life Schools Multi Academy Trust. The process of transferring the service to this new provider has been initiated and the plan (subject to due diligence) is that it will be completed by September 2024.

8. Education Strategy

To follow

9. Overview Report

Report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit

Pages 29 - 38

The monthly report includes the recommendations monitor, relevant key decisions, the Committee's work programme and any items for information.

Information about the Committee

Scrutiny Committees represent the interests of local people about important issues that affect them. They look at how the decisions, policies and services of the Council and other key public agencies impact on the city and its residents. Scrutiny Committees do not take decisions but can make recommendations to decision-makers about how they are delivering the Our Manchester Strategy, an agreed vision for a better Manchester that is shared by public agencies across the city.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee reviews the services provided by the Council and its partners for young people across the city including education, early years, school standards and valuing young people.

In addition to the elected members the Committee has seven co-opted member positions. These are:

- Representative of the Diocese of Manchester Canon Susie Mapledoram
- Representative of the Diocese of Salford Mrs Julie Miles
- Parent governor representative Mr Yacob Yonis
- Parent governor representative Ms Shade Davies
- Parent governor representative Mr Gary Cleworth
- Secondary sector teacher representative Vacant
- Primary sector teacher representative Ms Laura Smith

The co-opted members representing faith schools and parent governors are able to vote when the Committee deals with matters relating to education functions.

The Council wants to consult people as fully as possible before making decisions that affect them. Members of the public do not have a right to speak at meetings but may do so if invited by the Chair. To help facilitate this, the Council encourages anyone who wishes to speak at the meeting to contact the Committee Officer in advance of the meeting by telephone or email, who will then pass on your request to the Chair for consideration. Groups of people will usually be asked to nominate a spokesperson. The Council wants its meetings to be as open as possible but occasionally there will be some confidential business. Brief reasons for confidentiality will be shown on the agenda sheet.

The Council welcomes the filming, recording, public broadcast and use of social media to report on the Committee's meetings by members of the public.

Agenda, reports and minutes of all Council Committees can be found on the Council's website www.manchester.gov.uk

Smoking is not allowed in Council buildings.

Joanne Roney CBE
Chief Executive
3rd Floor, Town Hall Extension,
Manchester, M60 2LA.



Rachel McKeon Tel: 0161 234 4497

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Email: rachel.mckeon@manchester.gov.uk

This agenda was issued on **Tuesday**, **27 February 2024** by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit, Manchester City Council, Level 2, Town Hall Extension (Library Walk Elevation), Manchester M60 2LA



Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2024

Present:

Councillor Reid – in the Chair Councillors N Ali, Alijah, Amin, Gartside, Hewitson, Lovecy, Ludford, McHale, Marsh, and Nunney

Co-opted Voting Members:

Mr G Cleworth, Parent Governor Representative Ms S Davies, Parent Governor Representative Canon S Mapledoram, Representative of the Diocese of Manchester Mr Y Yonis, Parent Governor Representative

Also present:

Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Finance and Resources Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People

Apologies:

Councillors Fletcher and Judge

CYP/24/08 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2024.

CYP/24/09 Revenue Budget Update 2024/25

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which provided a high-level overview of the updated budget position. It set out the latest forecast revenue budget position, and the next steps. Following the Provisional Finance Settlement announced on 18 December 2023, the Council was forecasting an estimated budget shortfall of £38m in 2024/25, £79m in 2025/26, and £90m by 2026/27. After the application of approved and planned savings, and the use of c.£17m smoothing reserves in each of the three years, the budget was balanced for 2024/25 and the remaining gap reduced to £29m in 2025/26 and £41m by 2026/27. This position assumed that savings of £21.4m were delivered next year.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Changes to the budget position;
- Summary budget position;
- Budget consultation;
- Equalities impact and anti-poverty assessments;
- Scrutiny of the draft proposals and the budget reports; and
- Next steps.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources stated that the Government's approach to the Local Government Settlement had been chaotic and only announced just before Christmas. He reported that the final announcement had resulted in a cut of 84% in the Services Grant and that this equated to a £6.1m cut for Manchester. He stated that this had resulted in an outcry from local authorities and MPs from all political parties. He stated that this situation needed to be understood in the context of 14 years of austerity and Government funding cuts and unfunded pressures such as inflation and population growth.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources added that the Government had then announced an additional £500m for Social Care; however, local authorities were still facing a £4bn budget gap nationally, resulting in a number of local authorities serving a Section 144 notice and it was anticipated that more would follow.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources commented that, despite this, Manchester had set a balanced budget and this had been achieved through diligent planning and management that had seen strategic investment in preventative initiatives; using financial reserves prudently and investment in activities that were important for Manchester residents, such as libraries; leisure centres, highways, parks and green spaces and reducing the carbon footprint.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources stated that although Manchester had been able to deliver a balanced budget this year, the Council's financial position was expected to become even more challenging. The projected budget gap, even after using reserves for 25/26, was £29m in 2025/26 and £41m in 2026/27. He expressed concern that the Government had continually failed to listen to local authorities.

Decision

To note the forecast medium term revenue budget.

CYP/24/10 Children and Education Services Budget 2024/25

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) which provided a further update on the priorities for the services in the remit of this Committee and detailed the changes to the initial revenue budget options proposed by officers in November 2023. The Committee was invited to consider the proposed budget changes that were within its remit and to make recommendations to the Executive before it agreed to the final budget proposals on 14 February 2024.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Service overview and priorities;
- Service budget and proposed changes;
- Workforce implications; and
- Use of reserves and grants.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People reported that the Council had been in a difficult financial position for the last 14 years due to Government cuts but had continued to prioritise children and had invested in a range of successful innovations, such as Early Help and Edge of Care services. He informed Members that, excepting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, the number of Looked After Children in Manchester had decreased, which was contrary to the national trend and demonstrated the success of early intervention, providing support to families so that more children could safely remain with their families. He expressed concern about profiteering in the private placement sector and about the impact of the withdrawal of the Household Support Fund. He stated that the Council would continue to invest in Children's Services, highlighting investment in a range of areas including Youth Services, Sure Start and work to become a Child Friendly City.

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

- To thank officers for their work in making the most of the funding available to support children and families, in the face of continuing Government cuts, which restricted what could be done;
- To support the continuing use of the early intervention approach which had worked successfully over recent years;
- Concern about the challenges facing families, including increased use of Section 21 eviction notices and the removal of the Holiday Activity Fund, and the increased pressures on schools in trying to support these families; and
- The importance of providing Home To School transport for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and to ask for further information on the proposals for the service, including the new route planning software.

The Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) reported that, while the Council and its partners, including schools and health partners, were all facing challenges, they were continuing to focus on partnership working to support children and families. He informed Members about the refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan, one key area of which would be poverty. He advised that there was a focus on getting the maximum amount of impact and efficiency from services, rather than reducing services.

The Director of Education reported that an additional £3.9 million was being invested in Home To School Transport over the next three years, in recognition of the growing demand for the service and increased pressures; however, she advised that the Council was seeking to make the service more efficient, through route planning software and commissioning. She reported that route planning had previously been carried out manually by staff but that the software would enable more efficient routes to be identified and for buses to be fully utilised. She also highlighted the new policy which had been introduced the previous year, and which had been considered by the Committee at that time, which included a range of other options for eligible children, such as a personal budget for the family to use to arrange transport. She informed Members about an audit tool that was being developed to help schools to poverty-proof the school day and suggested that the Committee could receive a report on the work taking place at a future meeting.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People reported that the increasing cost of Home To School transport was a serious problem for local authorities across the country but that the Council had invested in this area and worked across different departments, including ICT and HR, to find solutions.

The Chair informed Members about the improvement journey that Children's Services had been on since 2014, when it had been judged to be inadequate by Ofsted. She highlighted that in 2010 the Council had lost 4000 staff due to the cuts to local government budgets. She praised the work that had taken place to get Children's Services to its current position, improving the lives of children and young people while also saving money, particularly through the implementation of new approaches to safely reduce the number of Looked After Children. However, she expressed concern that the ongoing cuts being imposed by the current Government were unsustainable.

Decision

To note the proposed changes which are relevant to the Committee's remit.

CYP/24/11 Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) which provided a summary of the confirmed DSG allocation from the 2024/25 settlement announced on 19 December 2024 and the budget allocation across individual school budgets and Council's retained schools budgets which was consulted and reported to Schools Forum on 15 January 2024.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Grant overview;
- Distribution across educational establishments and Council issues; and
- DSG medium term financial planning.

The Chair highlighted the pressure on the High Needs Block and reported that money was being recovered from some schools which had built up a large balance. She expressed concern about how some academy trusts managed their budgets. She informed Members that the provision of school buses was being reviewed.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Head of Finance (Children, Education and Schools) explained how the DSG from the Department for Education (DfE) was allocated, with most of it being distributed to schools, who were responsible for their own budgets, and a smaller amount being retained by the Council for the High Needs Block, which was distributed to schools during the year in relation to support for children with SEND. She reported that, following agreement from the Schools Forum, the approach to monitoring and recovering money from schools with surplus balances was being tightened up, with that money being used to address pressures in the High Needs Block.

The Director of Education reported that Early Years settings were also funded through the DSG and that this amount had increased due to the expanded entitlement to free childcare which was being introduced. The Chair expressed concern that the Early Years Block allocation from the DfE, as set out in table 5 of the report, was insufficient and that the sector would struggle to provide sufficiency of places when the entitlement was expanded. The Lead for Statutory Area (Early Years Access and Sufficiency) outlined some of the work the Council was doing to help the Early Years sector prepare for these changes. The Chair reported that sufficiency of places would be considered in a future Early Years report and she encouraged Members to monitor issues with this in their ward.

In relation to the High Needs Block, a Member informed the Committee about a recent visit that Members of the Ofsted Subgroup had undertaken to a new special school in the north of the city, where children were receiving the care and support they needed, and she highlighted the importance of ensuring that children with SEND were provided with the right support and environment, in specialist or mainstream provision, to enable them to achieve their potential. The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People suggested that the Committee receive a report on work taking place to provide better options for children with SEND, noting that for some children this would be in mainstream schools and that some children with more complex needs would require special school places. The Chair agreed to receive a report on this.

The Chair expressed concern that the Government was not covering the costs of the problems with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) which some schools were facing. She also expressed concern about the condition of many primary school buildings, stating that investment was needed in new school buildings but that the Coalition Government had cancelled the Building Schools for the Future programme in 2010, with the Council managing to obtain sign-off on The Grange shortly before the programme was cancelled.

In response to the Chair's comments, the Director of Education reported that there had been one school in Manchester with RAAC but that there were other concerns about the condition of school buildings in the city. She drew Members' attention to a section in the previous report (Children and Education Services Budget 2024/25) regarding funding which had been allocated to complete condition surveys of local authority-maintained schools, advising that these would assist with bids for any relevant funding which became available and would also inform how the capital maintenance grant was allocated.

Decisions

- 1. To note the report.
- 2. To consider sufficiency of Early Years places in a future report.
- 3. To receive a report on work taking place to provide improved options, in both mainstream and special schools, for children with SEND.

CYP/24/12 Update on Progress of the Leaving Care Service

The Committee considered a report and presentation of the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) which provided an update on Manchester's approach to supporting its Care Leavers.

Key points and themes in the report and presentation included:

- Demographic;
- Performance;
- Accommodation:
- Education, training and employment;
- Emotional, mental, physical and sexual health;
- Strengths and developments; and
- Next steps.

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

- To welcome the work being done, including the proactive approach, listening to the voices of young people and the level of contact with Care Leavers;
- Supporting young people with neuro-behavioural conditions, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) and trauma; and
- Adapting to the needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people including friendships and community connections and noting that this group was predominantly male.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) explained how bringing the service in-house enabled the Council to shape the culture and behaviour of how the service was delivered, creating a culture which encouraged innovation, rather than just compliance. In response to a further question from the Chair about whether this could be run as a service which other local authorities could buy into, he reported that consideration was given to what could be exported. He informed Members that good practice and learning was shared through the Greater Manchester Care Leavers Trust Board.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People reported that a lot of work had taken place in relation to FASD, after this had been raised at previous Committee meetings, including the Director of Public Health setting up a roundtable on this issue, involving a wide range of partners.

The Deputy Strategic Director of Children's Services informed the Committee about the 'Beyond Psychology' trauma-informed practice training which all the service's Personal Advisors had undertaken. He reported that the service had been designed in a way which recognised the diverse impact of trauma and FASD on young people's lives and how the service could effectively engage with those young people.

The Assistant Director (Children in Care and Care Leavers) reported that it could be a long process for a neurodiverse young adult who had not been diagnosed in childhood to receive a diagnosis so her service was focusing on dealing with the

presenting behaviours and not delaying pathway planning while awaiting a diagnosis, being aspirational for each young person and understanding them as an individual. She outlined work with Youth Justice on the SHIFT programme and work which was taking place on transitional safeguarding to support young people who did not meet the criteria of the Care Act assessment. She reported that, following feedback from a young person, her service was looking into making the 'Beyond Psychology' training available to some older young people to help them understand their cognitive processes and self-help approaches.

In response to a Member's question on the Southwark Ruling, the Deputy Strategic Director of Children's Services reported that, while he did not have the exact figures to hand and would provide these after the meeting, the trend in Manchester had changed significantly in recent years from 80% of 16- and 17-year-olds who presented as homeless coming into care and 20% returning to their families to 20% coming into care and 80% returning to their families, due to a new approach to supporting and engaging with families.

In response to a question about Kinship Carers, the Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People suggested that the Committee might want to receive a report on this at a future meeting, to which the Chair agreed.

The Chair commented on the 13 young people who were in custody. She informed Members about a visit to Wetherby Young Offenders Institute which had taken place in conjunction with the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee. She expressed concern that Barton Moss Secure Children's Centre had not agreed for Members to visit.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People highlighted the positive work that the Youth Justice Service and SHIFT team were doing and suggested that the Committee might want to visit them in future.

The Assistant Director (Children in Care and Care Leavers) reported that the service had recruited a number of male Personal Advisers, who were able to provide male role models. She advised that the housing band one model had been expanded to include shared accommodation, which could be particularly useful for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people who had travelled together and lived together. She clarified that young people who had been the subject of Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or had been privately fostered were still classed as Care Leavers and that young people in this position were starting to be aware of the Leaving Care Service and approaching them for support. In response to a Member's question, she confirmed that the service wanted to diversify its Care Consultants and was doing targeted work to recruit Care Consultants who had been through the Youth Justice system and young people who were unaccompanied asylum-seekers. In response to a question from the Chair about 'suitable accommodation', she advised that unsuitable accommodation was defined by the Department for Education (DfE) as bed-and-breakfast accommodation or custody, stating that none of their young Care Leavers were in bed-and-breakfast accommodation. She informed Members about targeted work her service had been doing with HMP Hindley and Barton Moss Secure Children's Centre to support Manchester's young Care Leavers who were in custody.

In response to a Member's question about the cultural background of Care Leavers, the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) drew Members' attention to the pie chart on ethnicity on the second page of the presentation and stated that additional information, such as religion, was also available. He assured Members that one of Children's Services' priorities was to be sensitive and responsive to children and young people's identity.

Decision

To receive a report on Kinship Carers at a future meeting.

CYP/24/13 Update on the Government's Strategy to Reform Children's Services (Stable Homes, Built on Love)

The Committee considered a report and presentation of the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) which provided an overview of the Government's strategy for the reform of children's services and the implications for Manchester.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- The six strategic pillars of Stable Homes, Built on Love and the phased approach to reform;
- The National Kinship Care Strategy;
- The Children's Social Care National Framework;
- The multi-agency statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023; and
- The national digital and data strategy, which included a proposed National Children's Social Care Dashboard.

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

- Concern that there was no certainty of funding for these reforms;
- How much confidence was there that Manchester could implement these reforms on time;
- Kinship Carers and private fostering, including ensuring that families were getting the support they needed; and
- The selection of eight Local Authorities to take part in the Kinship Care pilots.

The Chair informed Members of the work of MP Andrew Gwynne on Kinship Carers. She highlighted the role of multi-agency working, including the police, in relation to complex safeguarding and informed Members about place-based multi-agency work in her ward to address complex safeguarding concerns.

In response to the Chair's comments, the Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People advised that Ward Councillors for an importance source of intelligence on what was happening in their ward and he encouraged Ward Councillors to share any concerns they had so that they could be addressed.

The Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) reported that, while the Council was still awaiting further details of the reforms from the Government, it had already invested in some of the key areas and would respond innovatively and creatively to meet these new challenges. He advised that the Council should be provided with funding from central Government for new burdens placed upon it. He reported that there had been no announcement from the DfE as yet on the eight Local Authorities which would participate in the Kinship Care pilots and that Manchester already paid its Kinship Carers comparable rates to Foster Carers.

The Head of Service Provider Services reported that approximately 20% of Looked After Children in Manchester lived with Kinship Carers, under the current definition of this term. She reported that 666 children were subject to Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) and 236 lived in kinship fostering arrangements. She outlined the support that was now available for Special Guardians including training, designated support groups and access to the Adoption Support Fund and highlighted the benefits for children of living with extended family. She reported that the disruption rate was lower for Kinship Carers and had decreased further as the support offer had been improved. She informed Members that the Council had achieved Fostering Friendly Status as an employer.

In response to comments from the Chair about having 'great' Social Workers, the Deputy Strategic Director of Children's Services suggested that the Committee receive a report on the updated Children's Services Workforce Development Strategy at a future meeting, to which the Chair agreed. The Chair reported that Members would be visiting frontline Social Workers to ensure that they had an accurate understanding of the situation.

Decisions

- 1. To note the report and seek further updates on progress for each specific area of reform, to be included in the Committee's work programme for 2024/25.
- 2. To receive a report on the updated Children's Services Workforce Development Strategy at a future meeting.

CYP/24/14 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.

A Member who was the Chair of the Ofsted Subgroup invited Committee Members to join the Subgroup.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme.



Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 6 March

2024

Subject: Manchester Sensory Support Service Commission

Report of: Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

Summary

This report is an update to a previous paper brought forward in March 2022 in which Executive gave approval for officers to identify a future provider for Manchester Sensory Support Service through an open tender process. This process has now been completed and the contract for this service has been awarded to Big Life Schools Multi Academy Trust. The process of transferring the service to this new provider has been initiated and the plan (subject to due diligence) is that it will be completed by September 2024.

Recommendations

It is recommended Scrutiny Committee members.

- 1. Consider and comment on the actions taken to progress the delivery of Manchester's Sensory Support Service.
- 2. Seek assurance the identified provider will be delivering Manchester's Sensory Service by September 2024 and measures of success.

Wards Affected - All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city	N/A
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments	

Our Manchester Strategy outcomes	Contribution to the strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The Sensory Support Service will support all schools to be inclusive and improve the outcomes for children and young people with a sensory impairment. This will enable them to access employment and other opportunities in the city.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	An effective Sensory Support Service will work in partnership with education providers in the city to make sure that children and young people achieve their potential in education and develop skills and talents which will enable them to access jobs and opportunities created in the city.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Regular attendance at a high performing, inclusive school and access to the right support helps all children and young people to develop appropriate social skills, self respect and respect for others and therefore make a positive contribution to their community.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Access to effective and inclusive schools providing high quality education is central to the Council's strategy of developing sustainable neighbourhoods, to make Manchester increasingly attractive to economically active people as a place to live, work and bring up children.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Enabling children and young people to use technology effectively will enhance their opportunities in the labour market and ability to connect with friends.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences - Revenue

There are no plans to reduce the commission for the Sensory Service, therefore, in considering the options presented the financial consideration focuses on robust financial oversight rather than on financial savings. The commission remains £2.83 million.

Financial Consequences – Capital

None

Contact Officers:

Name: Paul Marshall

Position: Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

E-mail: paul.marshall@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Amanda Corcoran
Position: Director of Education

E-mail: amanda.corcoran@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Andrea Daubney

Position: Assistant Director of Education

E-mail: andrea.daubney@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- 1. Report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and Executive: Changes to Lancasterian Sensory Support Service, March 2017
- 2. Report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee: SEND Annual Report, March 2020
- 3. Report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee: Local Area SEND Inspection Letter, March 2022
- 4. Report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee: Manchester Sensory Service Commission, March 2022

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Our Manchester, Our Children: Manchester's Children and Young People's Plan, outlines Manchester's vision that all children and young people should be safe, happy, healthy and successful and that disabled children can be independent and have choices
- 1.2 During November 2021, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission conducted an Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Inspection of Manchester. Inspectors reported that 'Leaders have a clear vision for improving the outcomes for children and young people with SEND. This vision is communicated to stakeholders with passion and ambition. Leaders have made progress in improving the quality of provision for children and young people with SEND since the 2014 reforms.'
- 1.3 The role of the Sensory Support Service was acknowledged in the Ofsted CQC inspection report: 'The Manchester Sensory Service gives advice to parents of visually and hearing-impaired children, including those without an EHC plan. They help parents to make more informed decisions about education and specialist equipment and how to access community activities.'
- 1.4 In order to realise our vision for children and young people with a disability, Manchester City Council has the highest possible expectations for children and young people with sensory needs and the vision for the sensory service is that they ensure children aspire to reach their potential academically, have friends, be active in their communities, have support for their health and emotional wellbeing and be able to access work and independence as adults.
- 1.5 Manchester City Council offers a wide range of specialist services and provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) within the city: inclusive mainstream settings, schools and colleges; mainstream education with support; resourced mainstream provision; specialist education provision for children and young people with different types of needs. The local authority ensures the range of specialist services, and the number and types of specialist provision is continually reviewed to ensure there is a sufficient range and choice of 'school places' to meet children's presenting need and that settings and services deliver good outcomes for children and young people with SEND. This is also a requirement of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015.
- In 2017, the Executive agreed the proposal for the local authority to continue commissioning Lancasterian School to run the Sensory Support Service, for the specification of the commission to be revised and the value of the commission reduced by £275,510 to £2.83 million These changes were designed to make sure the Sensory Support Service was affordable; provided children and young people with access to specialist support and/or equipment to access learning, was responsive to changing individual needs and would contribute to the improvement of the outcomes for children and young people with a sensory impairment. This budget has been maintained since 2017 and

there are no plans to reduce this budget as part of the proposals outlines in this report.

- 1.7 In March 2022, Executive approved the proposal to commission a provider through an open tender process to run the Manchester Sensory Support Service and delegated authority to the Strategic Director for Children and Education to do all things necessary to conduct the procurement exercise and award the contract for the service in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive, City Treasurer.
- 1.8 This report provides an update on the tender process which was completed following the decision made by executive in March 2022. A full and competitive tender process has been followed. The tender document was published on the chest on 9 August 2023 and potential applicants were asked to submit a response to the published specification. The process closed on 2 October 2023 and applications were assessed. The contract was awarded to the successful applicant on 22 January 2024.

2.0 Background

2.1 National context

The SEND Code of Practice 2015, states that: 'Many children with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning or habilitation (mobility) support.' (paragraph 6.34). It goes on to say that schools should work closely with the Local Authority to agree the range of local services and clear arrangements for making appropriate requests. This might include schools commissioning specialist services directly which include: specialist teachers with a mandatory qualification for children with HI and VI (paragraph 6.61). The Code of Practice does not specify how these specialist services should be organised or commissioned.

2.2 In 2023, 86% of educational support services for deaf children nationally were directly operated by their local authority (CRIDE 2021). 10% were commissioned to a resourced provision, special school for deaf children or other special school. The other 5% were provided by another body or organisation or through a joint arrangement between local authorities or one authority and a public or private organisation. The national picture for services for children with visual impairment would likely be similar to those for hearing impaired pupils. All education services for sensory impairment (SI) in Greater Manchester are operated directly by the relevant Local Authority currently.

2.3 Local context

Manchester Local Authority commissions specialist support schools to provide all outreach support to mainstream schools and settings to ensure the environment is inclusive and staff have the skills and resources to teach and support children and young people with SEND. In line with this approach, the local authority has commissioned Lancasterian School through a service level agreement to provide a city-wide Sensory Support Service since 2011. The

Service is funded through the High Needs Block within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The value of the SLA is £2.83 million. Following a period when Lancasterian School faced a number of challenges including a change of leadership and governors and after implementing some alternative arrangements, in 2021 Lancasterian School confirmed that it no longer wished to provide governance and oversight for this service, so the local authority needed to seek a new provider. This led to consideration of options for future governance for the service.

- 2.4 The vast majority, of children and young people with sensory needs have their needs identified, assessed and provided for within local mainstream provision. Only in a minority of cases does a child or young person have sensory needs of a severity or complexity which require a statutory assessment, Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and/or specialist or resourced provision. For these children, flexible support in local mainstream provision is the first option considered. For some children, very specialist provision will be required which may be best provided by placement in a specialist school or a mainstream school with specialist resourced provision.
- 2.5 The Sensory Support Service supports all children and young people who have a sensory impairment such that additional support and/or advice are required, at home, in nursery settings and in primary, secondary and special schools. The age group supported by the Service ranges from birth to leaving school provision, i.e. 16 or 19 depending on provision. The Service also supports young people to make a good transition to post 16 provision.
- 2.6 Hearing and Visual Impairments are low incidence needs. The Sensory Support Service currently provides support to 795 children and young people with different levels of Hearing Impairment (HI); 474 children and young people with Visual Impairment (VI).
- 2.7 The Sensory Support Service is commissioned to provide:
 - A peripatetic service to promote inclusion and maximise outcomes for children and young people 0-25 in Manchester
 - Specialist staffing to maximise the outcomes of deaf children and young people in resourced provisions.
 - Training for staff in educational settings across Manchester to enable them to better meet the needs of sensory impaired learners
 - Individualised assessment, advice, training and direct interventions for children and young people referred to the service.
 - Specialist advice to the local authority to enable the authority to discharge its functions.
- 2.8 The peripatetic service must provide appropriate and timely assessment and support for children and young people aged 0-25 from time of diagnosis to leaving school, further education or training.
- 2.9 Depending on the assessed need interventions may be provided by the peripatetic or resourced provision staff, including:

- Direct teaching of skills to mitigate the impact of sensory impairment
- Support to families and settings through bespoke training, information, advice and modelling good practice.
- Assessment of specialist equipment needs.
- Support for transition.
- Contributions to multi-agency meetings, assessments and plans.
- Signposting families and professionals toother sources of support.
- Signposting children and young people to opportunities for meeting others with similar needs and providing opportunities as required.
- 2.10 The Service is responsible for providing specialist staffing required to maximise outcomes for pupils in resourced provisions for deaf learners, working in close partnership with mainstream school leaders and staff. The specialist staff from the service are expected to teach language and curriculum areas and may teach maths and other areas of the curriculum.
- 2.11 The service also provides and maintains specialist equipment, software and resources. The service will loan equipment to children/young people and settings to enable access to the curriculum, support independent learning and prepare for adulthood. The service is responsible for repairs of resources it has loaned and checks and maintenance of hearing aids and radio aids.
- 2.12 The service will loan specialist learning resources to families to support the child's development and will support, assist and train schools and settings to produce learning resources in alternative formats, such as Braille.
- 2.13 The Service is also required to support the local authority to fulfil its statutory duties through:
 - Contributing advice for children and young people undergoing EHCP assessment and for reviews of EHCPs
 - Present expert evidence at Tribunals and other meetings.
 - Provide all of the specialist input identified as its responsibility in the EHCP
 - Provide data and professional insight to allow the local authority to plan and meet needs of children and young people with sensory impairments.
 - Build capacity in settings across Manchester by providing training and awareness raising relating to sensory impairment.
- 2.14 The Service is required to provide advice and support to assist families in particular for families with a child that is newly diagnosed or new to Manchester.

2.15 Staffing

Staff are currently employed by Lancasterian School, which is a maintained school. There are currently 52.88 full time equivalent posts; the majority of staff are teachers and teaching assistants. Other roles include audiologist, specialist technicians, family support, habilitation (mobility) officers, ICT and business management/administration. Teachers are required to have a

specialist qualification – Teacher of the Deaf or Qualified Teacher of Visually Impaired. Most of the posts are term time only.

3.0 Future governance of the Sensory Support Service

- 3.1 A number of options were developed and considered with the service to identify the best possible future governance and oversight arrangements going forward. There has been considerable learning from both the colocation and governance of this service within a school structure. Placing the service within a school structure has ensured much closer links with developments in curriculum and teaching and learning and also provided flexibilities and opportunities for recruitment and staff development. However, the considerable reach of this service and size of budget and staffing as set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.15 has also placed additional responsibilities and pressure on a local Governing Body which is also responsible for the governance of the school; evidently a priority for the Governing Body.
- 3.2 In March 2022, it was decided that we would maintain the strengths of the current model and commission the service from a new provider. The provider would be procured via procurement process in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as applicable). Officers took advice from Legal and the Procurement Service and were confident that with a very clear specification which would require potential providers to be operating within the school system with a strong track record of improving outcomes for children and young people that this option would confer the greatest benefits to children, young people and staff, whilst providing the local authority with assurance that outcomes are delivered. The local authority currently commissions the Educational Psychology Service and has taken this out to a competitive procurement exercise. There have been many benefits from commissioning this service from another provider including being able to hold the provider to account for performance and delivery without becoming involved in specialist recruitment and training as well as organising operational delivery of a very large service and other transactional issues.

4.0 The following was considered in the specification for a new managing organisation:

4.1 Leadership and education:

It is important that the managing organisation in the future can provide strong support and challenge for the service, and provide governance and make decisions based on a good understanding of education, SEND and school improvement strategies.

4.2 **Joint working:**

Manchester has decentralised SEND support services, and therefore, there is an additional importance for a commitment to information sharing and to work in partnership with other SEND services in the city.

4.3 Co-production:

The service should work in coproduction with families; using the voice of children and young people and their parents/carers to inform support offered to individuals and for wider service development.

4.4 HR issues:

If the service were commissioned to any provider other than a community school, TUPE would apply. An education provider would understand the HR issues in relation to the education workforce and have appropriate policies and systems in place.

- 4.5 The Head of the Sensory Service engaged Sensory Service staff to explore with them future governance arrangements. There was consensus that staff would like consideration of the following as priorities in any future arrangement:
 - A clear vision for future of the service, in terms of delivering the best service to children and young people including a continuation of the direct teaching role of the service.
 - An equal partnership where the service's needs are understood and receive equal priority with those of the managing organisation.
 - A "proportional" say in governance if a school is commissioned. This would include staff and service user representation.
 - The Sensory Service budget ring-fenced.

5.0 Performance indicators and reporting requirements

- 5.1 The Service will be required to provide a twice-yearly monitoring report. The report will include:
 - How the service contributes to the vision for all children including those with SEND safe, happy, healthy, successful and independent.
 - Caseload data
 - Number of referrals received
 - Timescales in responding to referrals and requests for specialist advice
 - Pupil outcomes
 - Evidence of pupil and parent/carer voice
 - Satisfaction data
 - Training provided to schools and other agencies and impact of training
 - Service staff development
 - Budget
 - Service development plan

6.0 Outcome of commissioning process

6.1 Big Life Schools Multi-Academy Trust has been procured via a procurement process in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Big Life Multi-Academy Trust run two successful primary schools in Manchester (Longsight Community primary and Unity Community Primary). The Trust is sponsored by The Big Life group, which provides support, governance and

strategic direction to the schools. Big Life is a social enterprise which helps people to help themselves by delivering children and family, skills and employment, and health and wellbeing services across the north of England. Comissioners feel this organisation will contribute to good outcomes for children and young people and provide a stable future for capable, confident and talented staff. They have a track record of successfully running schools and education services; strong governance and a robust back office which provides professional development, finance and HR support.

7.0 Proposed timeline

- 7.1 It is proposed the following indicative timeline will be followed to ensure a smooth transition:
 - Contract awarded 22 January 2024
 - Consultations with staff and unions June 2024
 - Contract starts 1 September 2024
- 7.2 Dates for staff consultation and start of contract are subject to due diligence.

8.0 Financial considerations

8.1 There are no plans to reduce the commission for the Sensory Service, therefore, in considering the options presented the financial consideration focuses on robust financial oversight rather than on financial savings. The commission remains £2.83 million.

9.0 Legal considerations

- 9.1 When commissioning new contracts for the procurement of goods, services or the execution of works, the Council must comply with the requirements of the public contracts regulations 2015 (PCR) and its own Contractual Procedure rules as set out in the Council's constitution. Failing which, any subsequent award of a contract may be subject to legal challenge from an aggrieved provider, the remedies of which include claims for damages or seeking to have the awarded contract set aside. Given the value of the commission, the procurement of the Sensory Service will be subject to the PCR, which sets out requirements and timescales which will need to be accounted for in the design of the competition and the procurement timetable. Any procurement process must be fair, open and transparent, with all bidders being treated equally, and bids must be assessed and scored against clear and relevant criteria.
- 9.2 The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) 2006 regulations (TUPE) may apply to some or all of the staff under the current service provision, which transfer the existing employment contract terms of staff to the incoming provider (if this is a different organisation to the current provider). The TUPE regulations places obligations on the outgoing and incoming provider, including sharing employee liability information and consulting with staff.

10.0 Equal Opportunities

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

11.0 Risk Management

11.1 Robust contract management will be in place to ensure that any risks are managed and to ensure the new provider delivers the outcomes described in the specification.

12.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee note and support this development and comment on the next steps outlined to ensure the transfer is successful and the service continues to maintain a high quality service for children and young people with a sensory impairment.



Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 6 March 2024

Subject: Overview Report

Report of: Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit

Summary

This report provides the following information:

- Recommendations Monitor
- Key Decisions
- Items for information
- Work Programme

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to discuss the information provided and agree any changes to the work programme that are necessary.

Wards Affected: All

Contact Officer:

Name: Rachel McKeon

Position: Governance and Scrutiny Support Officer

Tel: 0161 234 4997

Email: rachel.mckeon@manchester.gov.uk

Background Documents (available for public inspection):

None

1. Monitoring Previous Recommendations

This section of the report contains recommendations made by the Committee, responses to them, if they will be implemented, and if it will be, how this will be done.

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
9 October 2019	CYP/19/39 Skills for Life	To request that the Council work to ensure that, as far as possible, all settings are involved in Skills for Life, including independent schools, and that officers look into how Skills for Life could be incorporated into the contracts when Our Children are placed in non-Council-owned residential settings.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Neil Fairlamb, Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)
6 November 2019	CYP/19/48 Youth and Play Services - Young Manchester	To request that clear information on the availability of toilet facilities, for example, in park cafes, be included on signage in parks.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Neil Fairlamb, Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)
4 March 2020	CYP/20/16 Improving Children's Outcomes Through Collaboration and Working in Partnership in a Locality	To request further information on how the Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust is dealing with smoking around its hospital sites and to note that the Executive Member for Children and Schools will circulate a briefing note on work that is already taking place to address	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Paul Marshall, Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
		smoking in pregnancy.		
22 July 2020	CYP/20/26 Manchester's Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing	To request that school governors be included in the plans for schools and that CAMHS and the support on offer be included on the agenda of a future Chair of Governors briefing.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Amanda Corcoran, Director of Education
2 December 2020	CYP/20/51 Early Help Evaluation (2015 - 2020)	To ask officers to consider how Councillors could help with this work and to circulate a note to the Committee Members on this.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be circulated to Members.	Julie Heslop, Strategic Head of Early Help
2 December 2020	CYP/20/51 Early Help Evaluation (2015 - 2020)	To request that the Early Help Project Manager provide information on the number of families, in relation to the presentation slides on areas of the city and the sustainability of impacts.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Ed Haygarth, Early Help Project Manager
20 July 2022	CYP/22/36 The impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's mental health and well-being	To request data on the ethnicity and geographical spread of CAMHS referrals, in order to be able to identify any gaps.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be circulated to Members.	Al Ford, Director of CAMHS/Rachel McKeon, Governance and Scrutiny Support Officer
21 June 2023	CYP/23/25 Update:	To recommend that consideration be given to	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported	Amanda Corcoran, Director of

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
	Education	partnering schools with	back to the Committee via the Overview	Education
	Climate	allotments and parks.	report.	
	Change Action			
	Plan 2022-24			
10	CYP/24/05	To arrange a visit to the	A visit to North Locality is taking place	Rachel McKeon,
January	Annual	Council's social work frontline	on 2 April 2024.	Governance and
2024	Adoption	services.		Scrutiny Support
	Report			Officer

2. Key Decisions

The Council is required to publish details of key decisions that will be taken at least 28 days before the decision is due to be taken. Details of key decisions that are due to be taken are published on a monthly basis in the Register of Key Decisions.

A key decision, as defined in the Council's Constitution is an executive decision, which is likely:

- To result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates, or
- To be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the city.

The Council Constitution defines 'significant' as being expenditure or savings (including the loss of income or capital receipts) in excess of £500k, providing that is not more than 10% of the gross operating expenditure for any budget heading in the in the Council's Revenue Budget Book, and subject to other defined exceptions.

An extract of the most recent Register of Key Decisions published on **26 February 2024** containing details of the decisions under the Committee's remit is included below. This is to keep members informed of what decisions are being taken and, where appropriate, include in the work programme of the Committee.

Register of Key Decisions:

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Decision Due Date	Consultation	Background documents	Officer Contact
Take a breath - Residential accommodation (2023/07/06A)	Strategic Director - Children and Education	Not before 6th Aug 2023		Report and Recommendation s	Sarah Austin, Strategic Lead - Commissioning sarah.austin@manchester.gov.u k
To implement a residential accommodation model to support hospital discharge and prevent hospital admission for children and young people.	Services				
The provision of a contraception & sexual health service for young people (2023/09/27A)	Director of Public Health	Not before 27th Oct 2023		Contract Report	Marie Earle, Strategic Commissioning Manager marie.earle@manchester.gov.u k
To award a contract to a provider to deliver a contraception & sexual health service for young people.					

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – March 2024

Wednesday 6 March 2024, 10 am (Report deadline Friday 23 February 2024)

Item	Purpose	Lead Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
SEND Annual	To receive the SEND (Special Educational Needs and	Councillor	Amanda	
Report	Disability) Annual Report.	Bridges	Corcoran	
Child Friendly	To receive an update report on work towards Manchester	Councillor	Paul	Executive Report
City Update	becoming recognised as a UNICEF UK Child Friendly City.	Bridges	Marshall	
Manchester	To receive an update report.	Councillor	Amanda	See March 2022
Sensory		Bridges	Corcoran	minutes.
Support				
Service				
Education	To receive a report on the Education Strategy.	Councillor	Amanda	Executive Report
Strategy		Bridges	Corcoran	
Overview	The monthly report includes the recommendations monitor,	-	Rachel	
Report	relevant key decisions, the Committee's work programme and any items for information.		McKeon	

Wednesday 22 May 2024, 10 am (Report deadline Friday 10 May 2024)

Item	Purpose	Lead Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
Corporate Parenting Co- operative	To receive a report on the Corporate Parenting Co-operative Strategy.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	

Strategy				
Re- establishment of the Ofsted Subgroup	The report seeks the Committee's approval to re-establish the Ofsted Subgroup for the 2024/25 municipal year.		Rachel McKeon	To be confirmed
Overview Report	The monthly report includes the recommendations monitor, relevant key decisions, the Committee's work programme and any items for information.	-	Rachel McKeon	
Annual Work Programming Session	The meeting will close for the annual work programming session where members determine the work programme for the forthcoming year. To follow a presentation from the Director/Lead Officers on upcoming issues and challenges within the Committee's remit.		Paul Marshall/ Amanda Corcoran/ Sean McKendrick/ Rachel McKeon	

Items To Be Scheduled

Item	Purpose	Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
School Streets	To receive a report on School Streets.	Councillor Bridges Councillor Rawlins	Amanda Corcoran	Invite Chair of the Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee
Domestic Abuse and Children	To receive a report on the impact of domestic abuse on children and the Safe and Together programme.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See March 2023 minutes

Children and Young People's Plan 2020 - 2024	To receive an annual report on the progress of this work.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See November 2020 minutes
Elective Home Education (EHE)	To receive a report on EHE. To include up-to-date figures on children who are not in school, including those whose parents have chosen EHE, with a breakdown by areas of the city.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See January 2022 and October 2022 minutes
School Attendance and Attainment	To receive regular reports regarding attainment and attendance.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
Personal Social Health and Economic (PSHE) Education	To receive a report on PSHE education in schools.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
Road Safety Around Schools	To consider a report on road safety around schools.	Councillor Rawlins Councillor Bridges	Kevin Gillham Amanda Corcoran	To be confirmed See January 2023 minutes
Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in Schools	To receive an update at a future meeting.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See September 2023 minutes
Youth Justice	To receive a further report on Youth Justice.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Post-16 Education Employment Training	To receive a further update and to invite a representative of Career Connect to attend the meeting.	Councillor Hacking	Amanda Corcoran	See December 2023 minutes

Strategic Plan 2022- 25 - Progress Update				
Early Years and the COVID-19 pandemic	To consider a report on Early Years development and the progress of the cohort of young children affected by the pandemic. To also include Health Visiting and sufficiency of Early Years places.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See May 2023, January 2024 and February 2024 minutes
Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)	To receive a report on work taking place to provide improved options, in both mainstream and special schools, for children with SEND.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See February 2024 minutes
Kinship Carers	To receive a report on Kinship Carers.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See February 2024 minutes
Stable Homes, Built on Love	To receive further updates on progress for each specific area of reform.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See February 2024 minutes
Children's Services Workforce Development Strategy	To receive a report on the Children's Services Workforce Development Strategy.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See February 2024 minutes Invite the Chair of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

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