

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Personnel Committee – 19 December 2019

**Subject:** Strategic Commissioning - Children and Education Services

**Report of:** The Chief Executive

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**Summary**

To seek approval for the establishment of a post of Strategic Lead for Commissioning Children and Education Services to take responsibility to lead the development, transformation and delivery of Children's Services commissioning strategy and associated priorities.

This role will be part of the leadership team within Children's and Education Services and work in close partnership with Manchester Health and Care Commission and regional and other commissioners in Greater Manchester. The primary aim of the post holder will be to nurture effective relationships in provider market, develop effective commissions that deliver tangible outcomes for children that are value for money; a key element of the Directorate's budget strategy.

**Recommendation**

The Committee is requested to approve the creation of a new role of Strategic Lead for Commissioning Grade SS1 (£60,857 - £65,865).

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**Wards affected:** All

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**Financial implications for the revenue and capital budgets:**

The financial implications of the proposals in this report are estimated to be £85k which are included in the 2020/21 budget proposals for the directorate's commissioning strategy.

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):** None

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Manchester is a large, diverse and complex local authority region with high demand on social care services and in addition a growing school age population, increased needs and a complex education system/family of schools. Since 2014, significant progress has been made within Children and Education Services in improving the services Manchester's children and young people receive. This has seen Ofsted judge Children's Service no longer to be 'inadequate', school attendance across the school system better than national averages and the percentage of primary schools judged to be good or better increased.
- 1.2 Despite the significant progress, Manchester City Council has over 1,300 children and young people that are 'looked after' and the cost for their care is rising. Ensuring there is sufficient and appropriate placements that offer value for money and meet the needs of our children and young people is critical to their future development and wellbeing.
- 1.3 An independent review into the Children's Services looked after sufficiency arrangements concluded that there is insufficient strategic commissioning capacity to develop and deliver a set of commissioning priorities designed to ensure the needs of 'our' children and young people are met and the Directorate is better enabled to successfully deliver its budget strategy.

## **2.0 Children's Commissioning**

- 2.1 Children's Services commissioning expenditure accounts for £50m of the Council's revenue through the commissioning of a broad range of services which contribute to and meet the needs of our children and young people; including those who are 'looked after' by Manchester City Council. However, the increase in demand, cost of care and lack of suitable care placements within the market has seen costs increase by 60% in the last 2 years. This is placing significant pressure on the Children's Services budget. Subsequently an analysis and review has been undertaken to consider our commissioning and procurement arrangements, which identified there is insufficient commissioning capacity to build effective relationships/partnerships within the provider market, work in partnership with other commissioners to develop purchasing frameworks/contracts and restricts the ability of the service to maximise its position in the children's care market; thus reduce placement costs.
- 2.2 Children's and Education Services has a commissioning, contracts and placements function which provides operational support to the Directorate with commissioning arrangements, contract management and assurance and placement finding. The function is comprised of commissioners and contract managers with the primary focus of providing operational expertise to the directorate which ensures services are commissioned in accordance with the commissioning framework, ensures value for money and contracts are managed effectively. The service is managed by a Commissioning Manager (Grade 12) who reports directly to the Strategic Director of Childrens and

Education Services and has overall responsibility for this service area including the management, governance, effectiveness and outcomes.

- 2.3 For the past two years the Directorate has focused on building a safe, effective and efficient commissioning function that is able to support and respond to the needs of our children and young people by offering sufficient range of placements and securing value for money, where appropriate. A review into the effectiveness of the Directorate's commissioning arrangements and capacity has concluded that whilst there has been success in building sufficient operational capacity to manage commissioning arrangements and contracts effectively, there is a gap in strategic capacity which is required for the service to become a more strategic and influential commissioner across Greater Manchester that is able to secure the best possible improvements and outcomes for our children and young people.

### **3.0 Strategic Commissioning**

- 3.1 Following an internal review of the commissioning/contract arrangements and the findings from the independent review which were carried out to ensure that there are sustainable arrangements for the future which enable the service to deliver a specific commissioning priorities, and secure improved outcomes for our children and young people, it is recommended that a Strategic Lead for Commissioning is established to provide strategic capacity and commissioning leadership/direction to the Children's Leadership Team. The main focus of the role will be to:

- Set strategic commissioning and contract management priorities for the Directorate;
- Improvement market management and relations;
- Develop a Children and Education Services commissioning strategy;
- Define/develop a recruitment and retention strategy for internal foster carers;
- Ensure services are strategically relevant, aligned and integrated with a broader range of public sector partners;
- Provide sufficiency and stability within the market place and support personal choice;
- Improve the quality of life and health outcomes for Manchester Residents;
- Improve health inequality;
- Increase employment outcomes for Manchester Residents; and
- Achieve and increase value for money for the public purse.

- 3.2 The delivery of these priorities and outcomes will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan, Children and Young People Plan and Budget Strategy.

- 3.3 The Strategic Lead for Commissioning will work in partnership with MHCC to build effective and sustainable commissioning arrangements, lead system wide commissioning and deliver integrated health and social care services to secure improved outcomes for children and young people within Manchester.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

- 4.1 The proposal outlined within this report is designed to ensure that there is sufficient strategic commissioning capacity in place to support the Directorate of Children's and Education Service to effectively delivery its priorities, to meet the needs of the increasing number of looked after children, and secure value for money for the public purse.

#### **5.0 Comments from Trade Unions**

- 5.1 To follow.

#### **6.0 Comments from the Director of HROD**

In establishing the grade and salary for the role the Council's Job Evaluation Process has been applied.