

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2020

Present:

Councillor Stone – in the Chair
Councillors Sameem Ali, Alijah, Cooley, Hewitson, T Judge, Kilpatrick, Lovecy, McHale, Madeleine Monaghan, Reeves, Reid, Sadler and Wilson

Co-opted Voting Members:

Ms Z Derraz, Parent Governor Representative
Ms S Barnwell, Parent Governor Representative
Mrs J Miles, Diocese of Salford Representative

Co-opted Non Voting Members:

Mr L Duffy, Secondary Sector Teacher Representative

Also present:

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children and Schools
Darren Parsonage, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning (MHCC)
Katy Calvin-Thomas, Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO)
Nicola Marsden, MLCO
Karen Fishwick, Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

Apologies:

Dr W Omara, Parent Governor Representative
Ms J Fleet, Primary Sector Teacher Representative

CYP/20/14 Minutes

The Chair expressed his disappointment that the Department for Education (DfE) had agreed to the closure of Newall Green High School, noting that the Committee had opposed this. The Executive Member for Children and Schools reported that there had been a lot of local opposition to this and that the Council had opposed its closure. He informed Members that the Council had worked to develop an alternative proposal to save the school, including offering some additional investment, but had only received a response to its proposal after the decision had been announced. He reported that the Council was working to address the issues resulting from this decision, including finding new school places for affected pupils and looking at the pupils' transport needs. Members requested that an oral update on this be provided at the meeting of the Ofsted Subgroup on 18 March 2020 and that further information be provided at the Committee's meeting on 27 May 2020, to include how current Year 10 pupils, who would remain at the school, would be supported and the role of the academy trust in the lead up to this decision. The Chair requested that officers also keep him updated between these meetings. He advised that all Committee Members were welcome to attend the Ofsted Subgroup meeting on 18 March 2020.

Decisions

1. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2020.
2. To request that the meeting of the Ofsted Subgroup on 18 March 2020 receive an oral update on work to address the issues arising from the decision to close Newall Green High School, including progress in finding new school places for the affected pupils.
3. To request that further information in relation to the decision to close Newall Green High School be provided to the Committee's meeting on 27 May 2020, to additionally include how current Year 10 pupils, who will remain at the school, will be supported and the role of the academy trust in the lead up to this decision.
4. To request that the Chair be kept updated between these meetings.

CYP/20/15 Annual Report on Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND)

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which set out in detail the legal and strategic context in which services were delivered to children with SEND, a profile/demography of need in Manchester and an outline of the advice, support and services that were available for children and their families. In addition, the report detailed how children and their families were influencing and shaping how agencies and services worked together so that Manchester City Council and its partners continually improved the experiences and outcomes of children with SEND. It reported that investment in modern, energy efficient and high quality education infrastructure would drive reductions in carbon across the estate of schools.

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

- Overall population with SEND;
- How parents'/carers' and children's and young people's views impacted on strategic decisions;
- The Local Offer;
- How an integrated transparent pathway allowed parents and young people to access services across education, health and social care;
- How children and young people with SEND had their needs met through excellent education, health and care services, jointly commissioned where appropriate;
- Preparing for Adulthood (PfA);
- Improved outcomes and standards across education and training; and
- The workforce.

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

- To recognise the good work taking place in this area;
- How parents could be assisted to obtain the right adaptations for their children;
- Transport, including travel training;
- That mainstream schools which had a reputation for providing high quality support to pupils with SEND attracted more pupils with SEND and that this could place additional budget pressures on the school, particularly where children did not yet have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
- The importance of early identification of SEND;
- That some children with SEND benefited from being in a special school which had high aspirations for them but that for most children, including those with moderate learning difficulties, being in an inclusive, mainstream school was the best option; and
- Support for young people once they left school, including support for a transition to adult social care and health services.

The SEND Lead informed Members about work taking place to streamline the assessment and provision of equipment for children with mobility needs, for use both at school and in the home, and advised that officers would be able to provide further information at a future meeting as this work progressed.

The SEND Lead informed Members that approximately 35 pupils per year received travel training through a contract with the Travel Training Partnership which gave them the skills to travel to school independently and also to travel for leisure activities, which the young people found valuable. She reported that some short break providers were also being asked to help young people to develop the skills to travel independently and that schools would be offered training on how to deliver travel training to pupils with SEND, to enable more pupils to benefit from this. The Director of Education informed Members that officers were in discussions with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) about improving transport for young people with SEND, including the issuing of concessionary passes, and that a meeting was being arranged between young people from the Changemakers group and TfGM so that the young people could raise their issues directly.

The Head of Schools Quality Assurance and Strategic SEND informed the Committee that, if a school was facing financial challenges due to a high proportion of pupils with SEND, there was a mechanism for reviewing its funding, although she advised that there had only been one school so far where it had been considered appropriate to make adjustments to the budget.

The Head of Schools Quality Assurance and Strategic SEND informed Members that information on work to identify children with SEND at the earliest stage was covered in the Early Years report which had also been submitted to the Committee. She reported that a key element of the new Inclusion Strategy was the identification of any SEND, particularly Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Darren Parsonage from MHCC reported that girls tended to be better at hiding their needs, which might delay an autism diagnosis, but that the social communication pilot in south Manchester was identifying girls' needs earlier which would ensure they got the right support as soon as possible.

The Executive Member for Children and Schools highlighted the budget pressures which schools and councils were facing on a national level. He reported that the budget proposals due to be considered at the Budget Council meeting on 6 March 2020 included additional resources for the Statutory Assessment Team which dealt with EHCPs and that an additional £20 million had already been agreed to fund more special school places. The Chair advised Members that, although funding for the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant had been increased this year, this followed several years of under-funding, and that Members should continue to campaign for more funding.

A Member who was also a Parent Champion and a member of Manchester Parent Carer Forum outlined how parents of children with SEND were supporting each other and arranging activities where these were not already available in the local area. She advised the Committee that work was still ongoing and there was still room for improvement but that, as long as these issues were being discussed and parents were being included in these conversations, further progress could be made. The SEND Lead read out some comments from Jordan Navarro from Manchester Parent Carer Forum which recognised the multi-agency work taking place and the progress made so far to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. In his comments, he advised that there was a lot more work to be done but that he was confident that further progress would be made, working in collaboration with parents and carers.

The SEND Lead reported that the local authority and health services now had responsibility for supporting young people with SEND up to the age of 25. She informed Members that significant work was taking place with partners, including adult social services, health services and education, to improve the transition for young people who would require support into adulthood and ensure that they were able to have a good life as adults.

Decisions

1. To encourage Members to lobby the government for more funding for pupils with SEND.
2. To note that Ofsted inspection reports for special schools are being monitored through the Ofsted Subgroup.

[Samantha Barnwell declared a personal interest as a Parent Champion and a member of the steering group for the Manchester Parent Carer Forum.]

[Councillor Wilson declared a personal interest as a governor at Broad Oak Primary School.]

[Councillor Stone declared a personal interest as a governor at Manchester Secondary Pupil Referral Unit.]

CYP/20/16 Improving Children's Outcomes Through Collaboration and Working in Partnership in a Locality

The Committee received a presentation of Children's Services and Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO) which provided an update on the development of the

Children's Services Locality Model and partnership working with the MLCO.

The main points and themes within the presentation included:

- Update on the Children's Services locality programme;
- Partnership working with MLCO;
- The Smoke Free Family pilot;
- Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and the opportunity for a future partnership pilot in relation to this; and
- Next steps.

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

- To welcome the presentation and the work taking place;
- Venues within the community which could be used to engage with people, including the role of Sure Start Centres and the benefits of the co-location of different services;
- The role that schools and ward co-ordination could play in this work;
- The impact of smoking on health;
- That marijuana and shisha smoking were also issues of concern, not only tobacco smoking;
- That it was important to focus on and review how successful the work was in accessing hard-to-reach groups; and
- Smoking outside of hospitals, including hospitals providing facilities for smokers.

The Strategic Head of Early Help thanked Members for their comments, stating that they would be taken into account. The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services described the three phase approach to this work, starting with work within the Council on Early Years and Early Help, then collaboration and partnerships and finally looking at leadership, governance and accountability arrangements, which he suggested the Committee might want to consider at a future meeting. He also suggested that the appropriate scrutiny committee might want to look at the licensing issues relating to shisha smoking.

Katy Calvin-Thomas from the MLCO informed the Committee that Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust was working hard to prevent smoking on its sites and to encourage and support people to stop smoking. She offered to provide further information on how the Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust was dealing with smoking around its hospital sites, to which the Chair agreed. The Executive Member for Children and Schools advised Members that he would circulate a briefing note on work that was already taking place to address smoking in pregnancy.

Katy Calvin-Thomas reported that many adult health services were co-located with social care, mental health services and the Voluntary and Community Sector and that, as many parents were users of these services, they were looking into how this could be joined up with the work relating to children and families.

Decisions

1. 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 smoking in pregnancy.
2. To request an update in 12 months' time on both the Smoke Free Family pilot project and how the wider work is being expanded.
3. To encourage Members to discuss these issues through their Ward Co-ordination meetings.

CYP/20/17 Early Years Service

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which provided an update on the strategic and operational priorities in relation to Early Years.

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

- LGA Early Years Peer Review;
- Overview of Early Years Quality Assurance arrangements;
- Early Outcomes Fund;
- Performance and outcomes for the Healthy Child Programme and the Early Years Delivery Model (EYDM);
- Ages and Stages (ASQ3) Results;
- Communication and Language Pathway;
- Parenting Pathway;
- Planned evaluation of the EYDM;
- Summary of key Early Years outcomes; and
- Forward plan and priorities.

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

- To recognise the positive outcomes from the LGA Early Years Peer Review;
- To encourage Members to attend the meetings of the Ofsted Subgroup, which considered Ofsted inspection reports for early years settings;
- Concern about children who were not receiving adequate support and whose families were not engaging with early years services; and
- That training sessions were currently being delivered on Adverse Childhood Experiences and to encourage other Committee Members to arrange to attend if they had not already done so.

The Strategic Head of Early Help advised Members that the Sure Start Centres provided both universal services and a targeted offer and that they had skilled Outreach Workers working to engage with families who were not accessing services.

She reported that a Greater Manchester project called Data Analytics aimed to identify at an earlier stage which children were not on course to be school ready and outlined the approach which would be taken to improve school readiness, advising that further information could be provided at a future meeting as this work developed.

Nicola Marsden from MLCO drew Members' attention to the improvement in the uptake of the Developmental Assessments over the previous 12 months. She reported that the number of Health Visitor vacancies had reduced from 19 to 8 since September 2019 and that additional nursery nurses and administrative resources had been employed to support this work. She advised Members that take-up of the Developmental Assessments was being improved through providing assessments in the child's home and on Saturdays, improving the quality of their data and publicising the assessments through a range of settings including Sure Start Centres and GPs' surgeries. Karen Fishwick from Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust outlined how her service identified and engaged with families whose children had not had their Developmental Assessments, including through their Missed Appointment Policy, through referrals from other health services and through outreach work.

Decision

To receive an update report in 12 months' time and to note that aspects of this work will also be monitored through other reports on the Committee's work programme.

CYP/20/18 Overview Report

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme.