

## Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

**Report to:** Executive – 30 June 2021  
Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 21 July 2021

**Subject:** Manchester's Year of the Child

**Report of:** Strategic Director for Children and Education Services

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### Summary

Since the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 the country has been subject to various guidance, regulation and a series of 'lockdowns' to manage and control the spread of Covid19, which is widely reported to have had a detrimental impact on the UK's economy and population and amplifying the determinants of social and health inequalities. It should be noted that Greater Manchester/Manchester has experienced greater restrictions than most other parts of England, thus exacerbating further the negative impact of Covid19.

Manchester prides itself on being a warm and inviting city with something to offer for everyone. And Mancunians have generosity and spirit in their bones.

That spirit has been tested throughout the pandemic but, as usual, our communities pulled together in the face of the adversity and inequality that Covid has brought. We are asking the city to look at the city again with that still in mind but, this time, through the eyes of children and young people.

As it stands Covid has brought some key concerns that we must address before they become entrenched and hinder, or even prevent the progress of our children and young people:

**Education and Learning**– during the pandemic the gap between those children who are considered to be disadvantaged and their peers has grown significantly. We also know that learning time, language acquisition and other social experiences have been affected;

**Wellbeing** – We know there are higher levels of children and young people with anxiety and other mental health issues, compounded by limited contact with friends and peers during lockdowns;

**Fewer Opportunities** – There are fewer opportunities for young people leaving school or college and that's likely to lead to more unemployment;

**Financial Hardship** – we have increased issues linked to deprivation, loneliness and mental health issues from the pandemic including reduce access to support groups; Those are just some of the issues which is why we need a citywide approach to listening to what children and young people need; and then harness our collective resources, support and communities to bring more opportunities, training and experiences for the next generation. By doing this together the entire city can become a trusted guardian who will help children and young people to reclaim their futures. And what we all do now will be part of how we are viewed in history.

Our work is called a year of opportunity – but 12 months is just a kick-start. We want this commitment to be long-lasting and one more thing that sets Manchester apart. But first, we need to look at the facts and listen to our younger Mancunians.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended the Executive:

1. Endorse and promote the dedication of 2022 to celebrating the successes of Manchester’s children and young people and supporting their recovery from the impact of Covid19.
2. Promote initiatives/programmes within areas of responsibility that create activities, opportunities and celebrate the success of Manchester’s children and young people.
3. Endorse and support Manchester submitting an expression of interest to become part of UNICEF’s Child Friendly City and Communities programme.
4. Endorse the inclusion of a section of all reports presented to Manchester’s Executive and Scrutiny Committees identifying the benefits and opportunities for the city’s children and young people.
5. Request a progress and update report outlining the progress and impact.

Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment on the report.

**Wards Affected:** All

<b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> - the impact of the decisions proposed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

<b>Our Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Contribution to the strategy</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities.	Supporting, creating opportunities and enabling children and young people to be successful in contributing to and influencing Manchester’s economic growth, sustainability and continues to be diverse.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city’s economic success.	Ensuring children and young people are supported and afforded the opportunity to access and achieve in the city; empowered and supported by the delivery of a strong and cohesive system

	that works for all children and long-term future of the city.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities.	Improving education and social care services that are connected to the wider partnership build the resilience of children and families needed to achieve their potential and be integrated into their communities.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Improving outcomes for the children and families across the city, helps build and develop whole communities and increases the viability of the city as a place, to live, visit and work.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth.	Children and Education Services working in partnership enable children to become engaged, participatory and connected to their wider community. Thus, becoming better informed and even more able to be successful and support the continued growth in the city.

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

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue and Capital**

### Revenue

As set out in the introduction of the report a core purpose of dedicating 2022 to our children and young people is to build resilience and support the recovery from the impe contributions.

### Capital

There are no identified capital costs. acts of covid-19. The work will require additional capacity to ensure its successful delivery and it is proposed this will be met via the creation of two-month time limited roles at a cost of c£111k, there will also be a budget of £50k to support delivery, it is proposed that the costs will be funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF).

It is proposed events will be promoted and advertised via Manchester City Council Website and local media outlets. The £50k delivery budget will be used to fund some activities, but this is in addition and complimentary to other existing budgets allocated to the Communications Team, Youth and Play Service, Children and Education Directorate and social value.

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**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.

## 1.0 Context

- 1.1 In response to increasing Covid19 infection rates and pressures on the NHS, on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 the government launched a series of national 'lockdowns' and use of emergency powers. It is without doubt whilst necessary this has caused a great deal of disruption to people's daily life and none more so than that experienced by children and young people, at a critical time in their development. There is a great of research that indicates the parenting children receive alongside their social and learning experiences during their formative, primary and secondary school years are a key determinant in adulthood and overall health and wellbeing.
- 1.2 Children and young people since March 2020 have had to contend with significant disruption to their routines, social development, education and learning opportunities, leaving many feeling uncertain about their future. As a result, cognisant of our collective duties and responsibilities for children, a '*Business as usual but doing it differently*' approach was adopted. This included health services, youth providers continuing to support young people via virtual, detached and 1:1 provision, Manchester's 'family of schools' remaining open throughout the pandemic; working alongside statutory and targeted children's services. This has enabled services for children and their families across the city to work safely, effectively, creatively and innovatively together to promote children's learning needs and respond to those in need of help, support, protection as we sought to minimise the impact of the pandemic; continuing to build productive relationships and provide a safe 'face to face' service.
- 1.3 In addition, services for children and young people have worked together to provide a targeted approach, share good practice, implement government guidance and support our schools and settings operate safely, develop and improve the curriculum and education offer.
- 1.4 Aligned with the 'Our Manchester' Forward 2025 Strategy, the Children and Young People's Plan 2020 - 2024 – sets out the 'Our Manchester' priorities and those issues children and young people said were important to them. This plan articulates the city's collective ambition for children and young people into a single vision to '**build a safe, happy, healthy and successful future for children and young people**' in Manchester. *The impact of Covid19 does not alter this ambition, rather highlight pre-existing deficits/inequalities are further exacerbated, which unless attended to are more than likely lead to problems later.* It is therefore essential:
- 1.5 All children and young people feel **safe**, their welfare promoted and safeguarded from harm within their homes, schools and communities.
- 1.6 All children and young people grow up **happy** – having fun, having opportunities to take part in leisure and culture activities, and having good social, emotional, and mental wellbeing. It also means all children and young people feeling that they have a voice and influence as active Manchester citizens.

- 1.7 The physical and mental **health** of all children and young people is maximised, living in a low-carbon environment, leading healthy, active lives and have the resilience to overcome emotional and life challenges.
- 1.8 All children and young people afforded the opportunity to thrive and achieve individual **success** in a way that is meaningful to them and living in a topflight city. This includes access to high quality education, training, employment, or in their emotional or personal lives.

## **2.0 What Children and Young People Tell Us**

- 2.1 Despite the limitations for social contact, Manchester's Youth Council and Youth providers have continued to meet and discuss salient issues for young people, which have included anti-racism and climate change being regular discussion points. In addition, as part of 2020 'Make Your Mark' survey, 12.5k children and young people in Manchester participated and were clear whilst they were concerned about homelessness, Domestic Abuse and access to training and employment were important to them.
- 2.2 In addition to that offered by school leaders based on conversations in schools, as previously indicated during the last 12 months there has been a series of consultation with young people to understand their experience of Covid19 and how this has affected them, none more so than that undertaken by Young Lives Matters between April 2020 and March 2021. During this Time the 'voice' of c850 children and young people were captured from across the city.
- 2.3 It is evident from school leaders reports, that as the series of lockdowns progressed, children reported their days becoming monotonous and feelings of boredom and low mood. However, overall it would seem children in general have been very resilient throughout the pandemic and overall keen to return to school as and when they were Allowed/supported.
- 2.4 There is a consistency in the issues and views of young people identified through the work of Young Lives Matters and the feedback from the city's school leaders, which can be summarised as follows:
- Whilst many children and young people on returning to school reported feeling tired due to being less active, they have enjoyed their time at home and doing different activities with their families. However, as many young people indicated the range and quality of this experience was often determined by their family's socio-economic circumstances. It is noticeable we have seen an 6% increase in the overall number children being eligible for Free School Meals; equivalent to a 25% increase. In addition, at times we have seen on average an 150% increase in families accessing foodbanks over the past 12 months and financial hardship becoming a feature of everyday life for many children.

- The importance of safe, welcoming spaces for children and young people across the city; especially important for children who live in flats/apartments.
- A high number of children have reported feeling anxious about transition between school/college phases, their future opportunities and feeling isolated/lonely. This appears to have the potential to compromise the aspirations/hopes of young people across the city and is contributing to an increased number of requests for support and specialist intervention with young people's wellbeing/mental health.

2.5 In addition, for the reasons identified there has been for some children/young people an increase in them being vulnerable; open to exploitation and involvement in Anti-Social Behaviour and offending.

### **3.0 Education and Learning**

3.1 Manchester's schools have been diligent in providing a safe environment for children to learn and working with our priority groups of children deemed 'vulnerable' by virtue of their circumstances and legal status. As a result, children's attendance since 13 July 2020 has increased from c12 % of the school population to an overall rate of 94% during and since the Autumn term school when absence related to staffing shortages or need to 'self-isolate' are discounted.

3.2 On 4 January 2021 the Government announced that with immediate effect schools would be closed to most of their pupils who would be required to learn from home and that schools should only offer onsite provision to 'vulnerable children and children of critical workers'. As a result, despite achieving a good level of attendance in the previous term, during this period overall school attendance reduced to c16%. However, and positively following the lifting of the lockdown measures on 8 March 2021 overall attendance at Manchester's schools increased to 93% (primary 94.25%, secondary 92.47% and special 82.82%). Whilst this compares favourably to regional and national figures, there remain a significant number of children not attending school regularly particularly in our special schools. The most common reasons for absence are continued anxiety about returning to school and being overseas with their family and unable to return to the UK due to border restrictions.

3.3 An emerging theme over the last 12 months has been an increase in requests for Elective Home Education; this is mirroring a local, regional and national trend and is being closely monitored.

### **4.0 Impact**

4.1 Throughout the pandemic and lockdown phases, feedback from our schools have indicated when there were fewer children on site this enabled and supported children to develop stronger relationships with teaching staff, with examples of children reluctant to talk previously who are now confident

'talkers'. In addition, there has been evidence of these children making accelerated progress.

- 4.2 During this period of national restrictions, the government supplied schools with c11k digital devices for 'vulnerable' children in Manchester and required them to provide remote education for those children not able to attend school. The quality of the remote learning offer provided by schools was subject to quality assurance visits undertaken by Education Services. These visits identified that Manchester's schools were adopting a creative and innovative approach to remote learning and the offers were generally, of good quality. These findings were also supported by OFSTED which also completed assurance visits in some of our schools.
- 4.3 Despite the creativity and diligence of school staff and the council taken to support children's attendance and learning there are several issues emerging within school settings and can be summarised as follows:
- 4.4 The provision of digital devices by the government for many children was welcomed, however this did not reach all children such as those who live in a low-income household or where there are multiple children resident. The learning for these children and those who had limited access to WIFI, parental support, space and other basic elements that support a child's learning will have undoubtedly compromised their education. It is therefore important we do not see remote education as an adequate substitute for a classroom experience; especially for those children disadvantaged and/or in the primary phases through to years 10.
- 4.5 Special schools have reported that emotionally most children and their families seem to have coped well and they have been good at communicating when struggling, subsequently there has been an increase in requests and provision of 'short-breaks' for children with a learning/physical disability and/or additional needs.
- 4.6 Schools/college/setting leaders have reported there remain a high level of anxiety amongst school staff and general concern in the short and longer term for:-
  - Children's mental health and wellbeing
  - Increased number of children with emerging additional needs in school especially in nursery/reception.
  - Gaps in learning and long-term impact on outcomes for children - in particular younger children in Year 1 where skills such as reading were not consolidated and have been forgotten and older children where they have missed significant elements of the curriculum content and vocabulary; potentially compromising the foundations for further and higher education learning.
  - Loss of or lack of opportunities to practice key skills eg communication (children with English as an additional language) technical or academic language; evident in lessons where their word retrieval has reduced), teamwork, self-management or belief (core skills for life).



- Adjudication of children's attainment in June/July 2021 and the impact on all transition phases and especially, Year 6/7, 10, 11 and Year 12 who may have not been able to engage with a full curriculum.

4.7 Whilst much of the above issues are anticipated to have an impact on all children to a lesser or greater extent, they are most likely to have a greater impact on those children who are living with disadvantage by virtue of the socio-economic, race or culture.

## 5.0 Early Years

5.1 The Early Years Services has continued to and refocused its work and developed an even closer working relationship with key partner agencies including Midwifery, Health Visiting and targeted services such as those providing speech and language and parenting interventions to maintain contact with and support parents.

5.2 A flexible and adaptive response was developed and ensure 'one to one' support was available for the most in need to compensate for group activities. Unfortunately, despite adapting the service offer fewer universal interventions were accessed by parents compared to pre-pandemic rates. However, there was an evident increase in the 'targeted interventions' provided and accessed by parents.

5.3 Health visiting Key Performance Data for Quarter 3 2020 (Oct – Dec 2020) has indicated that the uptake of the 9 month and 2 Year development review decreased during the pandemic period by 3% when compared to Quarter 4 2020 (Jan 20 – March 20) with 73% take up, a gap of 8.4% compared to national rates.

5.4 In addition, the uptake of the 2-year developmental review decreased by 12.2% to 64%, a gap of 14.5% compared to national uptake. This is in addition to less children (569) having a 'wellcom' screening (a speech and language tool to identify early communication and linguistic needs) during the second half of 2020.

## 6.0 Impact

6.1 It is universally recognised the first 1000 days are critical for a child's physical, emotional and neurological development. Yet for some children due to their parents own wellbeing, the limited opportunities for them to play and interact with others will most likely have had a detrimental impact on their overall development.

6.2 There has recently been number of research reports published including ***Babies in Lockdown: listening to parents to build back better'*** (August 20) which highlighted:

- Almost 7 in 10 parents felt the changes brought about by COVID-19 negatively affected their unborn baby, baby or young child.

- 34% of respondents to the survey believed that their babies' interaction with them had changed during the lockdown period.
- One quarter of parents reported concern about their relationship with their baby, and one third of those would like to get help with this.
- Almost half (47%) of parents reported that their baby had become clingier.
- 6 in 10 parents shared significant concerns about their mental health.

6.3 These findings were reflected in local consultation and engagement as part of Manchester's Start Well Strategy involving 201 conversations with Manchester's residents when 91% of families reported that the pandemic had negatively affected their experience of raising a baby. Thus, reinforcing the importance of play, social contact and early parenting support for babies and young children to thrive, develop and be ready to learn.

6.4 The reduction in children's parents taking up developmental reviews and requests/access to parenting interventions, alongside fewer children receiving communication and language 'wellcomm' assessments and offer of 'free entitlement and play' provision compared to pre pandemic exacerbates the existing challenge in closing the national gap and improving school readiness.

6.5 In addition, it is most likely over the next 12-24 months there will be an increase in children having delayed language development, conduct disorders and attending their primary school 'not ready to learn'. Thus, leading to an increase in children with SEND and requiring an Education Health and Care Plan.

6.6 The longer-term impact if not addressed will most likely lead to a need for specialist service and the perpetuation of poor health outcomes and limited life chances. #

## **7.0 Children's Services**

7.1 During the pandemic there has been an increase in agencies across Manchester seeking and accessing advice and support from Children's Social Care. The most common requests relate to:

- Financial difficulties
- Parenting challenges (some young parents who have not been able to access parenting support groups)
- Domestic abuse/violence
- Mental Health worries for both parents and their children (CAMHS report an 8% increase in requests for services).
- Young children sustaining injuries caused due to lack of supervision.

## **8.0 Looking to the future**

### **8.1 Government announcements and activities**

8.2 Nationally Sir Kevan Collins has been appointed as the Government's

Education Recovery Commissioner to oversee a long-term programme of work to support children and young people recover from the impact of the pandemic £700 million in funding has been allocated to 'Education Recovery' and includes:

- £280 million Recovery Premium – for schools (primary and secondary). One-off funding allocated on basis of pupil premium. Some flexibility for schools in terms of how they use it (average £6k per primary; £22k per secondary) but strong steer towards those EEF projects with evidence of efficacy.
- £200 million for Summer Schools – for academic 'catch-up' and enriching activities led by schools. Secondary schools only will be able to draw down the funding with a suggested focus on in-coming Year 7 pupils. Funding is for summer 2021 only.
- £200 million Tutoring Programme – to extend the National Tutoring Programme, introduce 16-19 Tuition Fund (for colleges), and £18m of the overall £200m is for early language support, targeted at reception and nursery.
- £22 million Accelerator Fund – there is limited information on the scope of this project, but it is intended to scale-up and spread small-scale projects recovery projects.

8.3 The Government has also announced that this summer's exams will be replaced by a system informed and led by teacher assessment.

8.4 Sir Kevin Collins work is due to report in May/June 2021.

8.5 Engagement with Public, Voluntary and Business Sector

8.6 Initial discussions have been held with members of the Children's Board, key public sector organisation leadership teams/boards and aspects of Manchester's business sector. Whilst it is evident a great deal of activity takes place within the public, voluntary and private sector to create opportunities and experiences for children and young people, there is an overwhelming recognition of the disruption children and young people have experienced over the last 12 months. Throughout these discussions the enthusiasm and commitment to do more and different is tangible.

8.7 Manchester has strong partnership arrangements across the Education and Children Services sector which will enable us to develop our approach and should the opportunity present itself work with government departments. Our schools, settings and colleges know their communities and are respected experts at ensuring that children who are disadvantaged can make progress and 'recover' as evidenced by our data for his cohort at all phases of Education in Manchester. Consequently, whilst the findings and recommendations from Sir Kevin Collins work is yet unknown, it is important schools are fully involved in the long-term planning for children's learning, are empowered and trusted to provide what makes a difference for children.

8.8 Working with the Manchester's Strategic Education Partnership (SEP) which has representation from across the education system there is the potential for this partnership to be repurposed to support, drive and deliver change over the next 12-24 months; responding to the voice of young people and issues as identified throughout this report and the findings/recommendations of Sir Kevin Collins. The scope of this would cover;

- Support and challenge the arrangements to ensure children in Manchester have the best possible start in life
- Support for children and young people to access opportunities to mitigate/address the impact of missed curriculum content and skills. This for example could be through art, theatre, cultural events inc scaling up and broadening the range of work covered through Read Manchester.
- Increase the offer and range of targeted support for those children disadvantaged by their ethnicity, vulnerability/disability and legal status (looked after/care leavers) and those at risk of not being involved in Education, Employment or Training.
- Build on and embed the use of the Skills for life framework across all of our schools, settings and youth sectors to enable our children and young people to be resilient, ambitious and independent.
- Work with the business and private sector to promote and support the aspirations through career fairs and the creation opportunities for young people; aligned to the economic growth across the City.

## **9.0 Social and Emotional Development Opportunities**

9.1 Research by 'City in the Community' found by engaging in activities in parks had helped children & young people recover socially from 'lockdown', with a 100% of those surveyed citing parks as being key in improving their physical and mental wellbeing.

9.2 Positively as reflected by the feedback from 'City in the Community' the DfE has recognised the importance of social/leisure opportunities to children's learning and development and in doing so made available funding for summer schools and via the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF). In Manchester this will be delivered via a partnership between schools, youth, play, culture and leisure services via coordination of activities over the summer holidays. This will include sports, arts, cultural activities with a focus on the development of communication, problem solving and team working skills. In addition, each provision will host regular drop-in sessions for children and young people facilitated by the educational psychology team, in order to provide additional support for emotional and mental well-being.

9.3 Alongside those outlined arrangements will be in place to link with targeted and specialist services such as those provided by Early Years, Early Help, Social Care and CAMHS.

9.4 The offer will be published and available across the city and several school Sites; including supplementary schools providing full day provision for children and young people throughout the summer holidays.

## **10.0 Engagement with children and young people regarding priorities for their future**

10.1 Whilst services have listened to the views, wishes and feelings of young people throughout the pandemic and the Children's Commissioner has recently launched the 'Big Ask', there has not been a systematic capturing of their views wishes and future aspirations of young people in Manchester as we transition out of the pandemic.

10.2 As we approach the summer break and a comprehensive range of activities via the HAF, there is an opportunity supported by the public and private sector to execute an innovative and wide-ranging engagement exercise to have 'structured conversations' with young people across the city. It is planned these conversations will involve leaders and executive members in focused on their success, future, what is important to them and what they would want the Council and its partners to prioritise over the next 12 months in Manchester; a year dedicated to them in 2022.

10.3 Considering the legacy aspect of dedicating a year to children and young people UNICEF operate a 'Child Friendly Cities' programme to work with a 'place' where the local council and their partners have committed to advance children's rights and associated 7 principles and put them into practice. This involves in addition to 'culture, communicating, leadership and cooperation' having undertaken a process of 'self-assessment' and discovery with young people focuses on accreditation in 3 of the following areas;

- Safe and secure
- Innovation
- Flourishing
- Education and learning
- Participating Child friendly services
- Equal and included.
- Healthy
- Family and belonging
- Place

10.4 It is anticipated from acceptance on to the programme to accreditation can take up to 4 years; resulting in a place that has demonstrated how more children feel safe, heard, cared for and are able to flourish as a result.

10.5 It is proposed Manchester as a place submit an expression of interest to become a 'Child Friendly City'.

## **11.0 Conclusion**

- 11.1 Manchester has so many reasons to be proud of its children and young people. Their resilience and achievements in the face of the Covid pandemic are something to be celebrated. Manchester Year of the Child aims to do exactly that, and more. By dedicating a year to a city-wide campaign of listening and acting together, we will create a programme of activities, opportunities and experiences that will help children and young people build back stronger and reclaim their future....and create a lasting legacy for the City to be recognised by UNiCEF as 'child friendly' as a place with young people as part of its DNA.
- 11.2 The Covid pandemic has caused a great deal of disruption to people's daily life and none more so than that experienced by children and young people, at a critical time in their development. Research indicates that the parenting children receive alongside their social and learning experiences during their formative, primary and secondary school years are a key determinant in adulthood and their overall health and wellbeing.
- 11.3 Manchester has a strong and improving education system, with 88% judged 'good' or 'better' (national average is 85.9%). We know school is a safe, stimulating and supportive place and there is good evidence to support Manchester's schools are talented in working with children disadvantaged by their race, disability or socio-economic circumstances. This is why throughout the pandemic there has been a focus on attendance which now stands higher than the national average at 94%
- 11.4 Covid has brought some key concerns for all children and none more so than those less fortunate that require a collective response before they become entrenched and hinder children's progress and their future as outlined throughout this report and can be summarised as follows:
- **Education learning and academic achievement** to mitigate lost learning and engage with the national curriculum to be successful; this is despite the best efforts of schools, families and a series of initiatives supported by government funding.
  - Financial **hardship alongside children's early development** and issues of isolation, parental mental health due to limited access to support groups and child health monitoring.
  - Children's **social development, resilience, physical and mental health wellbeing** inhibited due to limited contact with friends, peers, accessible activities/things to do and anxiety regarding the impact of the pandemic and their future. It is considered this may have an impact on children and young people's confidence, aspiration and subsequently their education, employment and training.
- 11.5 The findings and recommendations from Sir Kevin Collins at the time of writing are not known, However, Manchester is well placed through existing partnerships and a set of coherent strategies and initiatives to collectively coordinate our response to the pandemic and informed by both Sir Kevin's

findings and the views of young people mitigate the impact to build a safe, happy, healthy and successful future for the city's children and young people. If we are to have the desired impact and aide children and young people's recovery from the impact of the pandemic with pace and traction, it is reasonable to assume 'it will not just happen'. Rather, it will require a 'doubling of effort' and coordination to create a collective focus by all sectors in the city on key areas/activities.

11.6 As a result, the City Council aims to proactively work with and 'call to action' our family of schools, settings, the public, private and voluntary sector to work closely together in a focused and purposeful way to **listen to what children and young people are telling us and act** together to **create a comprehensive offer of activities, experiences and opportunities** with the creativity, innovation, pride and passion that is synonymous with Manchester; adopting a 'whole city' ambition to build back better and may include but not exclusively:

#### 11.7 Early Years

- Working across generations to combat issues of isolation/loneliness.
- Parenting support/groups.
- Promotion of language and communication skills.

#### 11.8 Activities and Experiences

- An annual programme of competitions, events for children and young people and opportunities to recognise and celebrate their achievements.
- Sponsorship for specific projects such as enhancing and scaling up of 'Read Manchester, Cultural events and/or Skills for Life.
- Out of school activities to promote social, physical and emotional wellbeing and development of life skills.
- Targeted engagement in Duke of Edinburgh Award/Cadets

#### 11.9 Training, Skills and Employment

- A comprehensive work experience programme and employment opportunities for young people include those with SEND.
- Volunteering opportunities for young people with SEND.
- An inspirational expo of careers that brings together the business sector and young people.
- Mentoring/coaching support.

11.10 This will require;

- **Seeing** the city and what it has to offer through young eyes; removing barriers and increasing accessibility.

- **Listening** to what young people want and need, now and for the future through a series of engagement events
- **Taking action** across the city to work together to inspire, create new opportunities, experiences and supporting infrastructure.
- **Promoting** the idea that everyone has a connection to improving lives for children and young people - everyone can be a 'guardian' to promote and secure a safe, healthy, happy and successful future for all of the city's children and young people.
- **Increasing participation** in existing events, activities and opportunities available to children and young people, delivered by council services, our partners and providers.

11.11 This way we can ensure there is an alignment between social activities/experiences, health interventions/services and skill development with what is happening in the classroom, maximising the impact of our collective intervention.

11.12 It is proposed 2022 will be dedicated to Manchester's children and young people launched by the resolution of Manchester City Council Executive. This will be then followed by a programme of engagement activities as set out in paragraphs 11.7 - 11.10; leading to a set of a few key priorities against which the impact and success will be judged and celebrated at an event for young people in 2023.

11.13 In addition, during the next 12 months Manchester will engage with UNICEF to progress its 'expression of interest' to participate in the Child Friendly Cities and Place Programme and ultimately awarded 'Child Friendly' accreditation.

11.14 A steering group which will be chaired by the Executive Member for Schools and Children's Services and made up of key strategic leaders to work alongside the business, public and voluntary community sector to shape, drive and oversee the delivery of key activities and develop the leaving of a legacy that places children at the heart of Manchester for years to come.