

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 7 December 2022

Subject: Post-16 EET Strategic Plan 2022-25

Report of: Director of Education

Summary

This report provides an update on work done by the Council to increase the number of young people accessing EET opportunities in the city, aligning with the city's economic priorities. It also outlines the plans for this work moving forwards, with the strategic plan developed to coincide with the Our Manchester Forward to 2025 Strategy and Manchester Inclusion Strategy 2022-25. The paper highlights the challenges the City will have in ensuring sufficiency of places for young people wanting to continue in Education due to the growth of the school population. It outlines the work that has been done to date including promoting opportunities for our post 16 providers to access capital funding through bids to the DFE and actively encouraging the submission of applications to open new provision through the free school process.

Please note:

- EET - education, employment or training
- NEET - not in education, employment or training

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:-

- (1) Read and consider the content of the Post-16 EET Strategic Plan 2022-25
 - (2) Recommend any aspects of consideration, amendment or clarification as required.
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Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

The Post-16 EET Strategic Plan includes within workstream 4, alignment with the Education Green Climate Action Plan 2022-24. As such, relevant impact is measured through the existing KPI's of this specific plan.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments

This Post-16 EET Strategic Plan is applicable to all young people of secondary and college age and their settings' with a specific reference to vulnerable groups as part of workstream 3 and the education sector at large as part of workstream 4.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The reduction of the number of young people within the raising participation age who are not in education, employment or training.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Implementation of robust quality assurance frameworks for post-16.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Inter-agency collaboration and partnership working to focus on identified intervention for vulnerable young people.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Supporting the post-16 education sector in reducing carbon emissions and developing sustainable school and college environments that provide opportunities for young people to benefit from the green economy.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Embedding social value / Our Year and its opportunities with education, employment and training.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

N/A

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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.

Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025

Work & Skills Strategy

Manchester Inclusion Strategy

Our Manchester Youth Strategy

Marmott Review

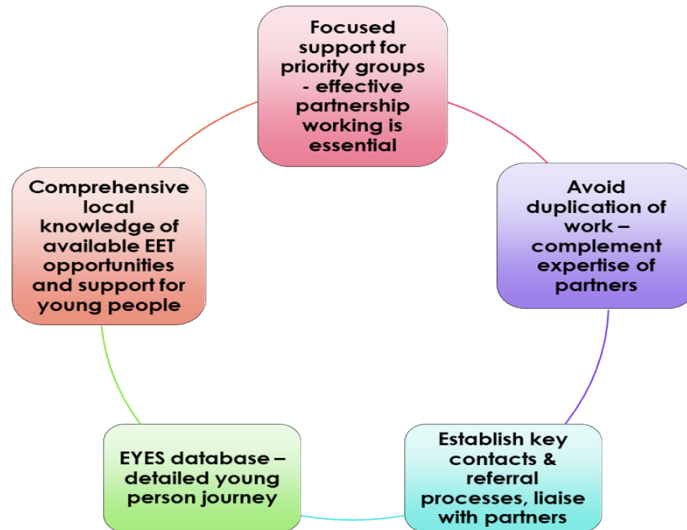
1.0 Background/Context

- 1.1 From September 2013 the Department for Education (DfE) raised the participation age (RPA). This means that all young people are required to be enrolled in some form of accredited education or training until at least their 18th birthday, with the Council having statutory duties. This can include full-time college courses, apprenticeships, traineeships, study programmes, supported internships and volunteering combined with part-time study.
- 1.2 In fulfilling this duty, the Council provides support to schools and post-16 education, training and engagement providers support to ensure our young people make a successful post-16 transition to a destination of their choice.
- 1.3 Career Connect are currently commissioned until March 31st 2023 to deliver the NEET prevention and reduction service in Manchester, supporting young people directly. The new tender process is ongoing, for a start date of 1st April 2023.
- 1.4 The Post-16 Lead is based within the Children and Education Services Directorate, whilst working within a matrix management model within the Growth and Development Directorate and the Work & Skills Team. The role is a conduit to Education, Work & Skills and wider MCC teams, with strategic oversight, co-ordination and steering of activity within this area implementing and influencing strategy and decision-making to maximise opportunities post-16.
- 1.5 The Post-16 EET Strategic Plan 2022-2025 details five identified workstreams as the key priorities. This provides an over-arching view of the opportunities, pathways and outcomes for young people in Manchester who are of raising participation age (RPA) and provides a consistent focus for partnership working that aligns to the broader strategic aims of the city.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Manchester has a strong Post-16 sector, where all education providers are rated by Ofsted as good or better and where young people and their families have choice. The introduction of T-levels has added to the offer and uptake has been good. There has been substantial investment in the Manchester College's estate with the refurbishment of Openshaw and the opening of the new City Centre Campus in September. The offer provided by the Manchester College is well matched to the city's growth sectors with employer input into curriculum design and delivery. The investment in the estate is aligned with the College's strategy to create a 21st century learning environment and replaces out of date and dilapidated estate that wasn't fit for purpose. All of the Post-16 providers work well together and with the City Council through the Post-16 network and are committed to meeting the challenge of the growing population. Manchester also has a high volume of engagement, employability and training opportunities with local, regional and national organisations.

- 2.2 Education Services have developed, in partnership with internal and external stakeholders through a consultation process, a Post-16 EET Strategic Plan 2022-25 that will support the sector in maximising the opportunities available to young people in transition from pre-16 compulsory education on to the next stage of their pathway to further education, training and/or employment. The strategic plan focuses on a three-year period to coincide with the Our Manchester Forward to 2025 Strategy; the Manchester Inclusion Strategy 2022-25 and the Work & Skills Strategy 2022-27, with identified workstreams that align with the city's strategic objectives.
- 2.3 These workstreams are:
- Education, Employment and Skills
 - Quality Assurance
 - Support for Vulnerable Young People
 - Social Value
- 2.4 Each has an overarching objective which will provide a focus of activity that will be implemented to achieve tangible and impactful outcomes.
- 2.5 These workstreams will provide the focus of all action plans within relevant networks/groups to ensure consistently, focus and enhancing of opportunities to work in partnership and collaboration.
- 2.6 Work on this area is led by the Post-16 Lead, and is supported by colleagues within education teams and by the Work & Skills Team, where an officer is specifically assigned to focus on the young people theme.
- 2.7 Career Connect are the Council's commissioned service for NEET prevention and reduction, operating a city-wide, locality and co-located model for NEET young people aged 16 to 18 (up to 25 for SEND and care leavers), with an Engage – Assess – Action Plan model of delivery to identify and overcome barriers to education, employment and training. The service offers support to young people in relation to engagement with education, training and employment opportunities; tracking of young people whose destination is not known; outreach and community-based delivery; support for young people at risk of becoming NEET upon leaving school; co-location of staff with partners and agencies.



See 3.4 for more details of the plan.

3.0 Progress to date

This section of the report describes the landscape of the post-16 sector in Manchester, previous years achievements and further details of the strategic plan workstreams.

3.1 Post-16 Provision

3.1.1 Manchester is now home to around 35% more people than at the turn of the millennium. This rise in population has resulted in a significant increase in demand for primary and secondary education places in the city since 2008 and these larger cohorts of children are now reaching the end of their education in school. To put into context that has resulted in the City opening 8 new secondary schools plus expansions of most of our existing secondary schools in recent years. This growth is now starting to impact upon post-16 providers of education and training.

- 3.1.2 Working with the Post-16 Reference Group, the City Council commissioned a report completed in Spring 2022 to look at the impact of this growth coming through the secondary sector in the City, on the existing post 16 sector and the Council's capacity to meet our statutory duty to provide sufficient opportunities for young people post 16.
- 3.1.3 This report looked at a range of data sets including ONS data and school census data and worked with post 16 providers operating in the City. It concludes that a substantial increase in demand for 16-18 education and training by young people living in Manchester is underway and that this is likely to outstrip the ability of providers to create additional places to meet this demand. In fulfilling its statutory duty to ensure the education and training needs of young people in the city are met, it recommends that Manchester City Council should work with its 16-18 provider base, DfE and other stakeholders (including those in neighbouring boroughs) to increase the supply of post-16 places.

This conclusion is based on the following information:

- Forecasts vary, but it appears Manchester's 16-17 year old population is set to peak around the end of this decade at a level that is 20-30% higher than it is now, before settling at a level around 15-20% higher than it is now through the 2030s.
- Population is set to grow fastest in the north of the city and within its most deprived wards. This is at odds with the location of the overwhelming majority of Manchester's post-16 academic education provision, which is concentrated in an area south of the city centre. Consequently, ensuring that there is post 16 Education provision in the north of the City is a strategic priority for the City.
- The sharpest year-on-year rise in demand at year 12 (age 16) was expected in summer 2022 and will continue to increase year on year thereafter with another sharp increase in the 2027/28 academic year and sustained into the following decade. There is currently around 10% more year 11 pupils in Manchester schools than in 2021.
- Faced with this likely growth in demand, this report estimated that by summer 2022 only around 5% extra capacity is available, the bulk of it concentrated at one relatively new provider. Initial feedback from our providers is that application numbers significantly increased across all settings for September 2022 intake and that most settings already have reached capacity. Manchester has a strong and diverse 16-18 provider base which attracts a large number of young people living outside of the city, particularly from other local authorities.
- Student demand has risen fastest for A-level education (partly a consequence of rising GCSE grades) and among STEM subjects, which providers note require specialist facilities that are less flexible and therefore

more difficult to utilise heavily. Circa 50% of young people in the city pursue vocational routes and the introduction of T-levels has been popular.

- 3.1.4 There have been ongoing discussions with education providers since the report's release to establish with confidence, sufficiency within Manchester's post-16 provision for 2022/23, and beyond. There is a commitment by existing providers to expand provision and offer increased flexibility of offer to meet the needs of the city. However, unlike the school's system where the Council is provided with basic need capital grant in order to secure sufficiency of school places, the Council is not provided with capital funding to support expansion of the post 16 sector. There is currently capital funding available from the DFE for the sector linked to growth in demand, but this is accessed through a competitive bidding process which makes strategic planning to ensure sufficiency of places extremely challenging.
- 3.1.5 The Council has been in dialogue with the DfE and are supporting providers in bids for this funding, influencing providers in decisions re: volume and type of education to be offered. However, successful bids will not be announced until Spring 2023 and therefore timescales for delivering increased numbers of places will be extremely tight. The Council has also encouraged some Multi Academy Trusts to submit free school bids for post 16 provision in the current free school round but again there is no certainty that these will be progressed. Ensuring that there is post 16 Education provision in the north of the City has been identified as a priority area for a free school bid.
- 3.1.6 Manchester has an existing strong partnership with education and training providers across the city and this collaboration in the post-16 sector is a pivotal aspect of the Council helping to coordinate and influence the offer. The council's involvement with the Post-16 Reference Group (education partners) and NEET provider groups (education engagement, employability and training providers) are central to this approach.
- 3.1.7 This has been further underpinned by the launch of a Post-16 Pathway Partnership in September 2022 following a period of consultation with involved stakeholders, outlining the expectation of all involved settings to collaborate and to work cohesively to address the needs of young people and the city on agreed themes that align with relevant strategic plan workstreams. Please see appendix 1.

3.2 Young people not in Education, Employment or Training

- 3.2.1 It is pleasing to note that Manchester and its partners have supported young people through the first uninterrupted year post-pandemic, ensuring that the number and rate of NEET and unknown has not been exacerbated.
- 3.2.2 The efforts of the Council and of stakeholders is clear in NEET data from the previous academic year. In July 2022, the number of young people who were NEET unknown was 165 (1.3%). This is significantly lower than July 2021 which was submitted at 408 (3.4%). In comparison, the number of NEET known was 452 (3.5%) in July. This is also lower than July 2021 where it was

submitted at 484 (4.0%). Overall, the combined NEET known, and unknown figures were 617 (4.8%) in July, which is a reduction from 892 (7.4%) in July 2021.

3.2.3 The table below shows the NEET and Unknown figures that were submitted to the DfE for the 3-month average for each year and have been published. The 3-month average looks at an average of NEET and Unknown figures that are submitted for December, January and February. This evidences the journey that the Council has been on in this sector, and the variance as impacted by the pandemic.

Academic Year	NEET Known	NEET Unknown	NEET Combined
2021/22*	2.9%	2.7%	5.6%
2020/21	3.8%	3.8%	7.6%
2019/20	3.6%	3.3%	6.9%
2018/19	3.2%	4.5%	7.6%
2017/18	3.4%	5.3%	8.8%

**Please note that the figures for 2021/22 haven't been released by DfE yet and have been calculated. There may be differences due to rounding once published*

3.2.4 The above represents overall, a strong performance from Manchester in relation to NEET population. From a starting point of 20.1% NEET in October 2021, each month saw a reduction in the figures in comparison to the same month in the previous year, and in July, saw Manchester 2nd in a statistical neighbour comparison table, 4th in GM and top of the core cities comparison table.

3.2.5 It is noted, as stated above, that Manchester will have an increase in the volume of young people within the post-16 cohort in September 2022 and for the next ten years. Indeed, every year brings a new cohort of young people and as such, the sector is back at the start.

3.2.6 Through our various localised and city-wide networks and social-value partners, we continue to work actively to create more education, employment and training opportunities for young people and are specifically targeting sectors and areas of the city that will recover and grow beyond the pandemic, including construction, health and social care, digital, creative industries and the green economy.

3.2.7 These approaches are impactful in the data analysis that indicates that as NEET numbers reduce, the volume of young people in education and/or training settings has increased post-pandemic. There do however remain areas of the city where NEET numbers remain disproportionately higher, eg North Manchester and some identified vulnerable cohorts continue to be a source of focus for targeted approaches and intervention eg those young people at risk due to poor attendance, care experienced young people, those with SEND and those with English as an additional language (EAL).

3.3 The Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI)

- 3.3.1 In 2019, the Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI) was introduced to high schools, including the Pupil Referral Unit, special schools and alternative providers, to identify Year 11 learners most at risk of becoming NEET. This enabled schools to provide additional support and interventions to ensure their students at risk of becoming NEET had a secure and appropriate post-16 destination and the additional support to make a successful transition into further education, training or work.
- 3.3.2 In February 2022, out of a total cohort of 6460 Year 11s (an increase from 5,611 in 2021), 601 young people were assessed as being high risk with multiple risk indicators and 684 medium risk with one risk indicator (an increase from 472 and 550 in 2021 respectively). This represents 20% of the overall cohort as being at risk.
- 3.3.3 The table below provides a breakdown of the Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI) cohorts for 2020, 2021 and 2022 leavers* evidencing a year-on-year increasing trend in terms of volume.

School Leavers	Year 11 Cohort	RONI High Risk	RONI Medium Risk	RONI Total	%
2022	6460	607	685	1292	20.0%
2021	5816	566	607	1173	20.2%
2020	5611	472	550	1022	18.2%

**Please note that the cohort total does not include those who were educated or home or not registered in education.*

- 3.3.4 To provide earlier intervention and support for schools and young people, the RONI process was brought forward in 2021/22, with schools requested to return their submissions earlier to allow for the introduction of NEET Prevention Panels where schools can discuss the most significantly high-risk young people from their high-risk cohort with a panel of statutory officers from relevant teams, and Career Connect. This led to over 13% of the high-risk cohort specifically focused on for intervention and support. The list was also circulated to schools for their Yr 10 cohort for an initial prompt regarding young people who may be at risk.
- 3.3.5 From the second half of the Spring Term, schools were invited to meet with an LA panel (including Career Connect), to discuss concerns re: their most at risk YP in transition to Post-16:

Number of YP discussed: 167
% of total RONI cohort: 13%
% of total high risk RONI cohort: 28%
North: 72 YP
South: 53 YP
Central: 42 YP
No Intended Destination: 94 (56%)

November data indicates that of these, 129 are now in education, employment or training (77%) with 38 being NEET (23%). Of the 94 with no intended destination, 23 remain NEET - 24%.

- 3.3.6 The RONI process has been brought forward again for 2022/23, allowing for earlier intervention and a longer leading time for relationship building with young people from involved services.

3.4 Post-16 EET Strategic Action Plan 2022-25

- 3.4.1 The five workstreams identified above have been purposely implemented in response to consultation with internal and external stakeholders from January 2022 - July 2022 with regards to the need for a 'NEET Strategy.' This has included consulting with education, training settings and Council colleagues within Work & Skills, Youth, Play and Participation and Neighbourhoods.
- 3.4.2 It was agreed during this consultation period that existing Council strategies are already in-place that have a focus on opportunities for young people, and that these needed clearer alignment, rather than a new and specific 'NEET Strategy.'
- 3.4.3 The consensus was that a strategic plan would provide a thread between the existing strategies and would become the over-arching drive of the Post-16 Lead and Work & Skills Specialist.
- 3.4.4 The plan has also been developed with consideration to existing programs/projects/partnerships with settings and organisations across the city; considering the objectives that are already in-place.
- 3.4.5 As such, the plan informs, guides and influences activity across all aspects of post-16 intervention and provision and identifies priorities, activity and opportunities, working with a large range of partners. The plan aims to ensure that young people are best equipped and prepared for life beyond compulsory education, with a particular focus on supporting young people for whom provision is furthest away from their starting point.
- 3.4.6 This includes the fostering of collaboration and partnership with internal MCC colleagues, as well as those working within education and training, youth and neighbourhoods, community safety and health and local and city-wide employers in order to meet the needs of the city and wider Greater Manchester area.
- 3.4.7 **Workstream 1 Education, Employment and Skills - embedding** a culture of pathways for all in post-16, linking opportunities to NEET reduction and prevention, labour market intelligence and wider MCC strategic priorities and plans supporting the raising participation age statutory responsibility.

Example of action - development of a co-designed education and training mission and vision, launched in September 2022 as a Post-16 Pathway Partnership, with the shared expectation of working in partnership as a sector

to increase opportunities for young people and their chosen pathway, and reduced the number of young people who are NEET. This includes the reforming of the identified groups above and shaping opportunities to further collaborate on shared themes through task and finish activity that involves partners from across the sector.

- 3.4.8 **Workstream 2 Quality Assurance - implementing** a quality assurance methodology of Post-16 sufficiency of provision, Skills for Life and career, employability, information and advice as well as understanding of the quality and extending the scope of influence and advice for settings working with young people to become work-ready.

Example of action - implementing a Post-16 youth voice offer, ensuring that young people are given a consistent and equitable opportunity to become decision-makers within the EET Strategic Plan and co-designing a commission for the QA of school/college CEIAG through the Inspiring IAG Award.

- 3.4.9 **Workstream 3 Support for Vulnerable Young People - establishing** intervention frameworks for and with settings for all young people, with specific reference to those identified as being vulnerable and requiring additional support.

Example of action - Establishing NEET prevention activity through NEET Prevention Panels; a repurposed RONI tool and Transition Guide, including frameworks for data sharing and Post-16 Skills for Life and targeted pilot commission with One Million Mentors.

- 3.4.10 **Workstream 4 Social Value - ensuring** that opportunities for young people moving into post-16 settings connect with employers, organisations and partners are maximised through the MCC social value focus.

Example of action - Launch of the North Manchester Education and Social Value Benefits Action Plan and supporting Our Year 2022 through the dissemination of work-related activity opportunities, negotiated with employers following online pledges.

4.0 Governance

- 4.1 There is an internal Post-16 group that meets once a term and brings together colleagues from across the Council who have a role within the post-16 sector; alongside the Post-16 Reference Group where post-16 education settings meet once every half-term; a city-wide NEET Provider Network for engagement and training providers to meet once every term and a school CEIAG (Careers, Employability, Information and Advice Group) Network.
- 4.2 A newly introduced city-wide Youth Opportunity Group provides a collaborative strategic focus for the city, and proposed NEET Locality Steering Groups in the North, Central and South have now developed further into Pathway Pop Up events on a ½ termly basis, aiming for more responsive and

directive intervention in more densely NEET populated wards in the city. This will ensure that districts now provide a more targeted and focused intervention for areas of the city where the volume of NEET young people is a concern. The CEIAG Network has also been repurposed to focus on quality of the CEIAG offer, transition and growth sectors within Manchester's economy, linking to labour market intelligence (LMI) data. The ongoing collaborative development of these groups has had a direct impact on the growing partnership approach and the overall numbers of NEET young people reducing.

- 4.3 Each group has a progress tracker that aligns with the 4 identified workstreams of the EET Strategic Plan to monitor and evidence impact in a consolidated and consistent format. An overarching Strategic Plan Progress Tracker is updated fortnightly and is reported via the Education Access Board, Education Quality Assurance Board and relevant Work & Skills groups.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 2021/22 was a very positive year for Manchester in relation to its NEET figures, with consistent improvements from previous years, and therefore more young people finding their pathway and remaining engaged throughout the course of the year. Those that required additional support, were able to do so via the Council's commissioned service, Career Connect, and we saw an increase in training/engagement provision on offer. We have a strong base to work from, with invested partners, keen to work in partnership and collaboration and increase opportunities and pathways for young people into employment.
- 5.2 2022/23 has started in relative positive manner. Our latest indicative data shows a reduction a reduction of 20.1% to 10.4% for the comparative period of the last academic year, and that we are on course to equal last year's 7.3% November figure by the time we submit to the DfE. This is a significant achievement given the 9.1% increase in the volume of post-16 young people in the city compared to the previous academic year.
- 5.3 Challenges remain, specifically with regards to sufficiency, with the outcome from the DfE Capital Fund not announced until Spring 2023. A response will be formed upon notification of the outcomes of the capital bid and pending free school round. In the meantime the Council will continue to raise this issue with the DfE and EFSA.
- 5.4 It will also be crucial that young people's voices continue to be a central part of this plan beyond Our Year and into the process of becoming a UNICEF Child Friendly City, and opportunities for them to hold MCC and sector leaders to account are continued. The alignment of this across the sector is ongoing, working with partners from the education sector, with Agent Academy, colleagues in Youth, Play and Participation to align our combined approaches to maximise the opportunity for young people to have their say and to influence strategic decisions that directly affect them.

5.5 Nevertheless, we are confident that through the development and implementation of this revised and ambitious EET Strategic Plan 2022/25, we can build from the momentum created through the approach taken in 2021/22 and Our Year 2022 and accelerate progress towards our desired outcomes.

6.0 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:-

- (1) Read and consider the content of the strategic plan.
- (2) Recommend any aspects of consideration, amendment or clarification as required.