

## Manchester City Council Report for Information

**Report to:** Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 8 November 2023

**Subject:** Manchester - Child Friendly City

**Report of:** Strategic Director – Children and Education

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### Summary

Our Child Friendly Journey follows the success of 2022 'Our Year'. 'Our Year' started a movement and was a catalyst for a change in behaviour, to make sure children and young people are at the heart of everything we do in Manchester. We always wanted this commitment to be long-lasting and one more thing that sets Manchester apart.

Manchester is working with [UNICEF UK's Child Friendly Cities and Communities programme](#) to put children's rights into practice. The programme aims to create communities where all children, whether they are living in care, using a children's centre, playscheme, youth centre or visiting their local library, have a meaningful say, and truly benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives.

Committee members will have the benefit of an animated presentation, which will provide an overview of the emerging themes throughout our Discovery phase.

### Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:-

1. Promote initiatives/programmes within areas of responsibility that create activities, opportunities and celebrate the success of Manchester's children and young people.
  2. Endorse and support Manchester's journey in becoming a globally recognised child friendly city.
  3. Committee Members are asked to consider and comment on the content of the report.
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**Wards Affected:** All

<b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city
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No assessment has been undertaken at this stage.
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**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments

Through the adoption of a Child's Rights Based approach, we will ensure adherence to all 7 principles, including the 'Non Discrimination' Principle. Every child and young person will be treated fairly and protected from discrimination, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, family background or any other status. Having access to equal opportunities and best possible outcomes doesn't mean being treated identically; some children and young people will need more support than others to overcome barriers and difficulties.

Work is also underway to introduce Child's Right Impact Assessments to ensure that the best interests children and young people are the primary consideration in all actions concerning children.

<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy</b>
<p>A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities</p>	<p>Through ongoing engagement with the business sector, growing and increasing access to good quality work experience placements and introducing young people to the world of work. Enhancing skill development which will help young people prepare for adulthood.</p>
<p>A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success</p>	<p>Young people will have opportunities to succeed in education, employment and training to raise aspirations, achieve and gain economic independence.</p> <p>Young people have access to opportunities to develop their skills for life i.e. communication, problem solving, self-belief, self-management and team work</p>
<p>A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities</p>	<p>Young people have opportunities which enable them to think progressively and build resilience underpinned by the principles of equality and acceptance. Young people have access to education and recreational provision which encourages a sense of belonging, develops their identity and ensure their voices are heard (Article 12 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child)</p>

<p>A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work</p>	<p><b>Article 2</b> All children under 18 will enjoy all the rights set out in the UNCRC without discrimination, and efforts to tackle the climate crisis should remedy its disproportionate impact on marginalised groups</p> <p><b>Article 3</b> The best interests of the child will be a top priority in any decision made or action taken to address the climate crisis.</p> <p><b>Article 6</b> Every child will enjoy the same opportunities to be healthy and grow in environmental conditions that don't impact negatively on their development.</p> <p><b>Article 12</b> Every child will have the right to be heard and their views will be taken seriously, including on discussions around climate and the environment.</p> <p><b>Article 31</b> Every child has the right to rest and play in a clean environment.</p>
<p>A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth</p>	<p>The city will be at the centre of first-class networks – locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. With our young people we will create a framework for action as a 'digital city' and use digital technology to transform how we live in the city, eg. looking at how it could reduce energy bills and carbon emissions.</p>

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

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

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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.

- United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Appendix 1)
- Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee – Our Year update 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022
- Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee – Our Year update and transition to CFC programme 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The legacy from Our Year 2022 included the ambition for Manchester to become internationally recognised as a 'Child Friendly City'. A place where the local authority and our partners have committed to advance children's rights and have worked with UNICEF UK to put them into practice.
- 1.2 Young people's voices will drive everything we do, young people's futures are our priority and Manchester will be a place where young people can access everything our vibrant city has to offer regardless of their background.
- 1.3 It is imperative that we continue to build on the economic and global success of the city and that all children and young people regardless of their background, culture, ability or anything else, feel welcome in Manchester.
- 1.4 Equality and Diversity will be a cross cutting theme and the non-discrimination principle of a Childs rights based approach will be applied at all times (Appendix 2)

## 2.0 Background

- 2.1 The [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) is the most complete statement of children's rights ever produced and is the most widely agreed international human rights treaty in history.
- 2.2 The UNCRC has 54 articles, **which can be found at appendix 1**, that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.
- 2.3 All children have the same rights as adults under human rights treaties, but only the UNCRC formulates these rights within the framework of children's lives and experiences.
- 2.4 In line with Article 12 of the UNCRC Manchester will be a place that has demonstrated how more children feel safe, heard, cared for and are able to flourish as a result.

## 3.0 Main issues

### 3.1 Discovery Phase

Over the last 6 months Manchester has been actively engaged in our 'discovery' phase, where we have listened to young people and considered existing data. This has been through discovery moments at events, workshops across schools and settings, and use of digital methods. We took an innovative approach in Manchester and held a road show style approach to our discovery consultation, which resulted in high numbers of engagement.

- 3.2 The purpose of the discovery phase was to hear from children and young people about what a child friendly city means to them, what they understand about children's rights, and what their priorities are for the duration of the programme. The findings of the discovery period will determine which 'badges' or themes we will select to work towards on our journey.
- 3.3 The views of 11,858 young people have been considered through surveys, workshops, 'discovery moments' and looking at existing data collected over the past 12 months. Nearly 1 in 10 young people have inputted to the discovery period, this is based on under 18's census data 2021.
- 3.4 We ensured that we heard from groups who are often seldom heard and as a result designed discovery moments and workshops to specifically hear from young people with SEND, Young Carers, Youth Justice and care experienced children and young people.
- 3.5 Throughout the Discovery phase, work has been done to ensure that the programme is communicated across the city. The child friendly website is now live [www.childfriendlymanchester.co.uk](http://www.childfriendlymanchester.co.uk)
- 3.6 The Child friendly branding was co-designed with young people, and throughout the programme there will further opportunities for children and young people to take ownership of the 'look and feel' of campaigns, web content and materials.

#### **4.0 Governance**

- 4.1 Multi-agency governance has been established to oversee the implementation of children's rights across the city/community's decision-making and strategy. An ambassador partnership has been established, with representatives from across the local authority, public and private sector partners.
- 4.2 The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People convenes and chairs both the Child Friendly steering group and CFC partnership, made up of representatives from across directorates and partners respectively.
- 4.3 There is a cross-cutting commitment to the programme, the partnership includes representation from all MCC directorates, voluntary, private and public sector organisations. Each respective organisation / representative will drive a child's right based approach across their respective areas.
- 4.4 Specific examples of progress include
- Neighbourhood teams using the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child to address issues around fly-tipping and littering, by reinforcing that children and young people have the right to play in clean and safe environments.
  - Local businesses contributing to our ambition, through expansion of work experience, career taster days and tailored workshops to develop certain skills.

- New policies and strategies that have been developed this year have focussed on articles of the UNCRC and strengthening opportunities for young people to be involved in decision making

4.5 Champions have been identified and are key to raising the profile of our CFC journey towards recognition as a UNICEF UK Child Friendly City or Community. Initially, this has been to help launch the programme, develop awareness and galvanise interest at the local level. Later, our CFC Champions will play an instrumental role during the discovery, development phases, and throughout delivery of the local CFC action plan.

4.6 It is recognised and central to the planning, design and delivery for young people to be at the heart of decision making and as a result maximising the opportunities available by using the democratic processes of Manchester City Council.

4.7 This will be achieved by focussing on equity and allowing all children and young people the opportunity to participate and influence. This will allow young people (especially those that are seldom heard) to gain a sense of belonging and ownership in relation to key decisions which affect them and their communities.

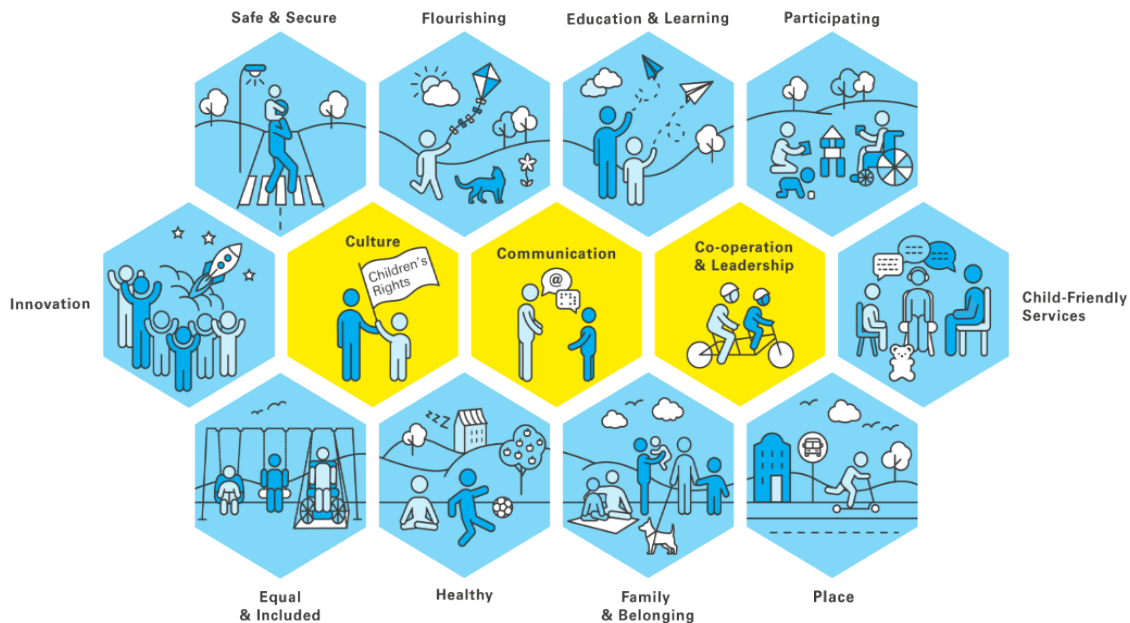
4.8 Our local Child Friendly youth governance structure will shape and influence the priorities and actions taken at the local level throughout our journey and beyond, as well as hold adult practitioners to account for the promises they make to children and young people.

4.9 The youth, play and participation team are leading on proposals to governance and the establishment of area youth forums which will strengthen the existing structures in place. It is envisaged the Area Youth Forums will be operational early in 2024 as we look to progress to our development phase of the programme. Consideration is also to be given to creation of a young person's participation network to steer the CFC programme.



## 5.0 Development stage

### 5.1 Badge selection



5.2 As a community we will select 3 thematic badges (blue badges) there are also 3 mandatory badges we will work towards (yellow badges)

5.3 **Communication** - Across the city information about children's rights is shared with children, young people and adults in different ways. People know when important decisions affecting children, young people and families are being made.

5.4 **Co-operation and leadership** - Across the city people will work together to make the city better for children and young people. Decisions will be made involving children and young people.

5.5 **Culture** - Across the city people will value and respect children and young people and people know about and respect children's rights. A baseline training needs assessment has been conducted (child rights knowledge, attitudes, practice, culture attitudes, behaviour) and understanding of training needs of different groups of staff is understood.

5.6 The animated film presented to committee members summarises our discovery work and the top 5 key themes that emerged from discovery ie **Safe and Secure, Healthy, Place, Family and Belonging and Equal and Included**

5.7 On the 7<sup>th</sup> November, our final discovery day is planned to consolidate the findings of the discovery phase, to help identify which should be our 3 badges for our Child Friendly Journey. Children and young people and decision makers will come together as equal partners to share their views and opinions on the emerging themes and to sense check that the findings are consistent.

5.8 Following the identification and selection of our 'badges', an Action Plan will be developed to chart and progress how Manchester will achieve them. The infrastructure to achieve this has been established and once finalised will provide a system to deliver our intended outcomes, track and report progress against the goals set out under each theme/ badge.

5.9 Further work will be done to ensure we have the correct representation of ambassadors who will be able to help drive forward progress in our respective badges and priorities.

## **6.0 Delivery stage**

6.1 The council will work with our partners and the local community, children and young people to carry out the Action Plan.

6.2 This will require a strategic cross-directorate and partnership approach as the programme aims to create a city where all children – whether they are living in care, accessing a leisure facility, visiting their local library, accessing health services – have a meaningful say in, and truly benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives

6.3 In order to gain accreditation an independent panel of child rights experts assesses the progress made and decides whether to recognise Manchester as 'UNICEF Child Friendly'. This process usually takes between 2-4 years.

6.4 In summary Manchester will be a place for children and young people where:

- Their voices are heard and listened to (Article 12)
- Their thoughts and opinions influence decisions that affect them (Article 13)
- Children have a meaningful say about how to make services better at the design, commissioning and delivery stage, and decisions are made with young people
- Children's rights are celebrated
- Every child will have the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities. Article 31 (leisure, play and culture)

## **7.0 Recommendations**

7.1 Promote initiatives/programmes within areas of responsibility that create activities, opportunities and celebrate the success of Manchester's children and young people.

7.2 Endorse and support Manchester's journey in becoming a globally recognised child friendly city.

7.3 Committee Members are asked to consider and comment on the content of the report.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Summary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Appendix 2 Child's rights based approach and principles