

## **Manchester City Council Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 6 March 2024  
Executive – 15 March 2024

**Subject:** Education Strategy

**Report of:** Strategic Director of Children’s and Education Services

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### **Summary**

This report describes a draft education strategy for Manchester from 2024 to 2030. It brings together our early years settings, school system and post 16 provision to ensure a strong and coherent education offer continues to be available to children and young people which meets the collective ambition and priorities of the City. The strategy also sets out the role of the Local Authority as a system leader, place shaper and advocate for children and young people within the education system.

The strategy supports the ambition of the City to become a UNICEF Child Friendly City, specifically article 28 the right to education and article 29 the goals of education to ensure education develops every child’s personality, talents and ability to the full.

The priorities within the Education strategy have been taken from the wide ranging engagement which was completed with children and young people during Our Year 2022 and the discovery phase of the Child Friendly City work. It has also been developed in discussion with education leaders over the last 18 months.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Comment on the proposed contents of the Education strategy
- (2) Agree the next steps

The Executive is recommended to:

- (1) Approve and endorse the content of the proposed Education Strategy
  - (2) Agree the next steps
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**Wards Affected:** All

<p><b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> -the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city</p>	<p>This Education Strategy includes ensuring schools/settings/college buildings are net zero carbon as one of its ambitions.</p>
<p><b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments</p>	<p>This Education Strategy includes ensuring schools and settings are inclusive, promote equality and challenge discrimination. The ambition is that children are proud of their identity and have a sense of belonging and that the education workforce better reflects the communities it serves.</p>

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
<p>A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities</p>	<p>Improving educational outcomes will contribute to Manchester’s young people becoming happy, safe and highly skilled and have increased life chances. Improved educational outcomes will enable Manchester’s young people to contribute to the economic growth and take advantage of the job opportunities created.</p>
<p>A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city’s economic success</p>	<p>Improving educational outcomes amongst the Manchester school population is essential for young people to gain qualifications and contribute to Manchester’s economic success.</p>
<p>A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities</p>	<p>The strategy sets out a number of actions to ensure that the potential of our children and young people is unlocked through our education system.</p>
<p>A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work</p>	<p>A strong and ambitious education system will make Manchester an attractive place to live and work.</p>
<p>A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth</p>	<p>An improving education system contributes to generating future growth by a highly skilled workforce and young people committed to reducing the carbon footprint.</p>

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

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

### Financial Consequences – Revenue

Met within existing resources

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

None

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### **Background documents (available for public inspection):**

- Manchester Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025
- First 1000 Days Strategy
- Manchester's Work and Skills Strategy

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report outlines a draft education strategy for Manchester from early years provision through to post 16. The aim is that the strategy follows on from the City's First 1000 Days Strategy for children and describes how our education system from early years through to post 16 connects to the aims of Manchester's Work and Skills strategy.
- 1.2 The strategy will also support the ambition of the City to become a UNICEF Child Friendly City specifically article 28 the right to education and article 29 the goals of education to ensure education develops every child's personality, talents and ability to the full. The priorities within the Education strategy have been taken from the wide ranging engagement which was completed with children and young people during Our Year 2022 and the discovery phase of the Child Friendly City work. It has also been developed in discussion with education leaders over the last 18 months.
- 1.3 The Strategy provides an opportunity currently to provide a clear direction of travel for our education system in the City in line with Our Manchester Strategy and the City's priorities. At a time when there is a lack of clarity regarding the future role of Local Authorities within the Education system, this strategy also asserts the role that Local Authorities can play to lead an education system at a place level within the current arrangements and any possible future policy changes. To align with Our Manchester Strategy, it is proposed that this is a 10 year strategy with a review in 5 years time which will provide an opportunity to amend it in line with any changes to national education policy.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Nationally the Education System has undergone significant change over the last decade. Schools, colleges and settings have experienced various reforms regarding funding, curriculum, external assessment and organisation. For schools this has resulted in a move from a Local Authority led school system to schools working in groups within a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) led system. Manchester currently has 186 schools cross the City with 45% (84 schools) now working within a MAT or a single academy trust (SAT) and 55% (98) maintained by the Local Authority. The vast majority of our secondary schools are now academies (26/30) and those which are not have a clear direction of travel into a local MAT which has been determined by Salford Diocese. There are 35 MATS and SATS operating within Manchester ranging from large national trusts such as United Learning to smaller 'home grown' MATS and single schools in a trust of their own.
- 2.2 Throughout the last decade, despite these structural changes to the Education system, Manchester Local Authority has continued to have strong relationships with schools in the City regardless of whether they are maintained or part of a MAT. This approach has meant that the Manchester family of schools generally operates as a coherent school system where schools work together in collaboration and in partnership with the Council to

provide education for Manchester residents. For a number of years, the Local Authority has worked with our home grown MATs to support their growth, supported new MATs to establish in Manchester and encouraged maintained schools to join MATS when this is the right decision for the school. Overall this strong partnership with our schools and MATS has meant that for example our school system has been able to respond quickly and effectively to the increased demand for school places we have seen in the City. The approach to school place planning has included opening a number of new schools all of which have been provided by MATs, some which been new providers within our schools system as well as expanding existing schools including academies.

- 2.3 The school system over time has moved towards a school led system with schools taking responsibility for their own improvement and development. Within this context, the Local Authority has developed a well understood approach to quality assurance of our schools which includes a universal offer which is taken up by the vast majority of our schools including academies. This enables the Local Authority to have a clear overview of the school system including where there is strong practice, responding to emerging issues and challenges across the sector as well as responding to individual school needs by brokering school to school support. The secondary school system in particular is in its strongest ever position in Manchester with 82.8% schools currently judged to be good or better and our GCSE results in 2023 comparing well to national particularly when considering attainment 8 and progress 8 indicators and outcomes for our disadvantaged pupils.
- 2.4 In addition, Manchester has strong partnership arrangements with the early years sector in the City provided by the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector and provides universal quality assurance offer and training for the sector. As with schools, this offer provides a clear overview within the Local Authority of the early years sector which enables us to meet our sufficiency duty, know where there is best practice and respond to emerging issues and challenges as well as responding to issues in individual settings. Currently 95% early years settings in the City are judged to be good or better.
- 2.5 Manchester also has a post 16 strategic partnership which includes post 16 education and training providers which operate in the City. All of our 6th forms and colleges are actively involved in this partnership. The partnership works collaboratively on common challenges within the sector most notably the current pressure on places across the sector and it also support the City's priority to reduce the number of young people not in education, training or employment post 16 and Manchester's Work and Skills strategy.
- 2.6 This draft strategy aims to capture the strength of the partnership working which exists in Manchester across the Education system and the strong sense of commitment our Educators have to Manchester as a place with its own distinct strengths and priorities. It is not intended to replicate national education policy but to capture the 'value added' for a child or young person of being educated in Manchester. It sets out the role of the Local Authority as the place leader within the system and the priorities for Manchester now and in

the future. It describes how the system working collectively can meet the aspirations and ambitions of our children and young people and ensure that they finish their education prepared for adult life.

### **3.0 Education Strategy**

3.1 The attached strategy (appendix 1) is set out as a series of connected slides currently. However, once content is agreed, the intention is that the slides will be set out as a poster and animation which can be easily displayed across the education sector. This strategy will sit alongside and is complimentary to Manchester's Inclusion Strategy 2022- 2025.

3.2 Manchester has a clear vision for all children and young people; that they are happy, healthy, safe, successful and as independent as possible which is well understood across the Children's partnership. This vision underpins all of our work with children and young people across the partnership.

3.3 Manchester's Education strategy starts with what children and young people have said, through different forms of engagement and consultation, is important to them in education. These form a golden thread throughout the strategy.

3.4 Our children and young people told us that education is extremely important to them and they want settings, schools and colleges which:

- Listen and respond to what they have to say and ensure children and young people know their rights and are influential
- Are inclusive, promote equality and challenge discrimination
- Are places where all children and young people feel safe and that they belong
- Support their mental and physical wellbeing and self esteem
- Provide school trips and residentials and provide or promote local low cost clubs and activities which they can engage in after school or college
- Provide them with skills for life
- Support them with transitions at all phases
- Promote awareness of climate change and are taking steps to actively reducing their carbon footprint
- Provide a digital offer which related to the future world
- Provide good quality careers advice including access to employment activities and work experience including access to part time work
- They can travel safely and independently
- Enable them to live satisfying lives and get a good job including for some the opportunity to access the most competitive career pathways

3.5 Linked to this, the strategy includes an offer for all children and young people educated in our setting, schools and colleges in Manchester. The aim is that throughout their education every child educated in Manchester will have the opportunity to access the following experiences:

- Develop Skills for Life: communication; creativity and problem solving; self management; self belief; team building
- Perform and/or experience a performance
- Attend a live sporting event
- Visit Manchester City Centre
- Visit a library, museum and an art gallery
- Experience swimming
- Visit a place of natural beauty
- Visit different places of worship
- Receive a book as part of a transition read and meet an author
- Enter a competition
- Make a contribution to the local community/environment and engage in social action
- Participate in physical and outdoor adventure activities
- Learn how to achieve good physical and mental health including healthy eating
- Learn about how to stay safe and have positive relationships
- Experience travelling independently
- Participate in a democratic process
- Have the opportunity to think critically/debate an issue
- Use advanced technology to develop and use digital skills
- Visit an FE college and a university
- Meet inspiring role models
- Access work experience/work placement
- Have the opportunity to volunteer
- Develop enterprise skills for example by raising money for a charity
- Access a mentor if needed

3.6 Opportunities to access these will be regardless of whether their families can afford to do them. Recent outcomes from the Bee Well survey conducted with children in year 8 and 10 over the last 3 years has shown a decline in children engaging with arts, culture and entertainment activities as they progress through secondary school and particularly if they are children eligible for free school meals or live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The survey also showed a decline in young people accessing sporting or physical activity as they get older and particularly girls not accessing regular physical activity.

3.7 This type of offer is something that many of our Education providers already do in different ways but this will ensure that this enrichment offer is consistent and made available to all of our children and young people regardless of which setting or school they attend. The idea of a Manchester offer for our children and young people has received very positive feedback from our schools and colleges to date. Young people specifically consulted about the offer have also really welcomed this. Our discussions with young people has shown that although most of them have had the opportunity to experience some of the things included on the list there has been wide variability depending on which schools they attended. They therefore particularly supported a more consistent approach. The aim is for other partners including businesses and voluntary sector to also support this offer when they are

working with our education settings and schools. The opportunities and experiences set out in the offer have been based on feedback from children and young people, practice which already exists in many of our schools and settings and discussion with education leaders and other partners.

- 3.8 The strategy sets out shared values and shared ambition for the educators in our City. This ambition will be achieved by having excellent early years education, excellent schools working together in a strong family of schools or MATS and excellent post 16 pathways where technical and academic pathways are equally valued, underpinned by strong place leadership from the Local Authority and other partnerships. Under each of these headings the strategy sets the main pieces of work taking place in the City which support the ambition and the delivery of excellent education across phases. The strategy includes a set of locally based expectations for all Education providers working in the City with our children and young people and this is important especially as we move away from a school sector maintained by the Local Authority towards a MAT led school system.
- 3.9 Manchester's ambition will only be achieved by a strong workforce across the sector, which reflects the communities that they serve, working in collaboration and not competition. In addition, schools will continue to need highly committed and well informed governors. Our children and young people should also be educated in high quality buildings which are carbon neutral and are a focal point of the local community. The strategy sets out how Manchester is working with the sector to achieve these aims.
- 3.10 The strategy sets out a clear role for the Local Authority. In addition to fulfilling its statutory duties, the Local Authority should act as system leader and place shaper; a champion of children and their families; a narrator of the local education system and a facilitator of local partnerships responding to local emerging themes and challenges. The Local Authority is also well placed to work on behalf of the local system at a national level to influence policy and secure external investment.
- 3.11 Finally, the strategy sets out how the Local Authority will work with One Education, Manchester School's Alliance and Greater Manchester to support the local education system to achieve our collective ambition for children and young people.

#### **4.0 Next steps**

- 4.1 Once the strategy is approved the aim is to produce a final version as a poster which can be easily displayed. A short film of the strategy with a focus on the offer for children and young people will also be produced and used to support dissemination over the summer term.
- 4.2 Overview and governance of the strategy will be with the Strategic Education Partnership which has representation from all sectors of Education and other services which support the system. Many aspects of the strategy such a Read Manchester, Skills for Life, our Education carbon reduction plan already



provide updates to this board. There is also a joint meeting with the Work and Skills Board twice a year to consider overlapping workstreams.

## **5.0 Recommendations**

5.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- Comment on the proposed contents of the Education strategy
- Agree the next steps

5.2 The Executive is recommended to:

- Approve and endorse the content of the proposed Education Strategy
- Agree the next steps