

Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

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

Subject: Manchester - Child Friendly City

Report of: Strategic Director – Children and Education Services

Summary

Following the formal announcement at Full Council on 31 January 2024, committee members will be familiar that Manchester is working with [UNICEF UK's Child Friendly Cities and Communities programme](#) to put children's rights into practice.

We are now in our 'development phase' of the programme. This is the phase where an action plan to progress and deliver each of the chosen 'badges' are to be considered and agreed by the Executive on the 15th of March 2024.

The action plan(s) will demonstrate how we will progress and evidence progress against each respective badge.

The badges were chosen after a record breaking consultation which saw over 11,000 children and young people take part.

The top three badges identified by Manchester's children and young people for the city to focus on are : **Safe and Secure, Place and Healthy.**

In addition to these the city will focus on a further three core badges **Culture, Communication** and **Co-operation and Leadership.** We have also committed to ensuring that the **Equal and Included** badge is a cross-cutting golden thread across all we do.

The city's bid for UNICEF recognition will now see the council and local partners putting children's rights into practice over the coming years, as we work together towards our shared goal for Manchester to be a UNICEF Child Friendly City.

Scrutiny members will have the benefit of seeing, and providing feedback on our respective draft action plans that will be submitted to UNICEF for final approval on the 7 March 2024.

Final action plans will be presented to the executive for sign off on the 15 March 2024.

Recommendations

The Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee members are recommended to:

- 1. Consider and comment on the report and priorities as chosen by children and young people.
- 2. Be an ambassador to support and lead conversations that challenge, influence and support
- 3. Consider the respective DRAFT action plan

The Executive is recommended to

- 1. To consider the observations of the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny
- 2. To support and endorse the chosen badge and supporting action plan(s).
- 3. Pledge a continued support to championing children’s rights within specific political portfolios and priorities.
- 4. Request an annual progress report and/or key milestones in the city’s journey to be a UNICEF UK Child Friendly City’.

Wards Affected: All

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

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	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.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Young people will have opportunities to succeed in education, employment and training to raise aspirations, achieve and gain economic independence. Young people have access to opportunities to develop their skills for life i.e. communication, problem solving, self-belief, self-management and team work
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	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)
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	<p>Article 2 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>Article 3 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>Article 6 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>Article 12 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>Article 31 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>
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Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences

Revenue / Capital Consequences

During the delivery phase there may be a requirement for investment/additional resources to address some of the themes/issues as outlined in the respective action plans. It is expected that resourcing requirements, if required will be met from within existing budgets.

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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 20th July 2022
- Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee – Our Year update and transition to CFC programme 12th January 2023

- Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee – Manchester - Child Friendly City update November 7th 2023

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Following a record-breaking discovery phase where over 11, 000 children and young people's voices were heard and subsequently endorsed at our Discovery Day on the 7th November 2023, Manchester's 'badges' were chosen.
- 1.2 A badge rationale was submitted and ratified by UNICEF UK to evidence how the 'badges' were selected and to demonstrate that children and young people had been at the heart of the decision.
- 1.3 The top three 'badges' identified by Manchester's children and young people for the city to focus on were announced at a full council meeting on the 31st of January 2024: **Safe and Secure, Place and Healthy.**
- 1.4 In addition to these the city will focus on a further three core badges **Culture, Communication and Co-operation and Leadership.**
- 1.5 In recognition of Manchester City Council's commitment to tackling inequality and to celebrate the rich diversity of the city we have also committed to ensuring that the **Equal and Included** badge is a cross-cutting golden thread across all other badges.
- 1.6 Children and Young people's 'voices' have been and will continue to be a key tenet of Manchester becoming a recognised UNICEF Child Friendly City.
- 1.7 In addition, children and young people will be supported to contribute shaping 'Our Manchester forward to 2025' for Manchester to be in the top-flight of world class cities by 2025 with a strong economy and highly skilled people and achieve our goal to be well-connected, limiting climate change and somewhere everyone feels safe and lives well in an attractive and welcoming city.

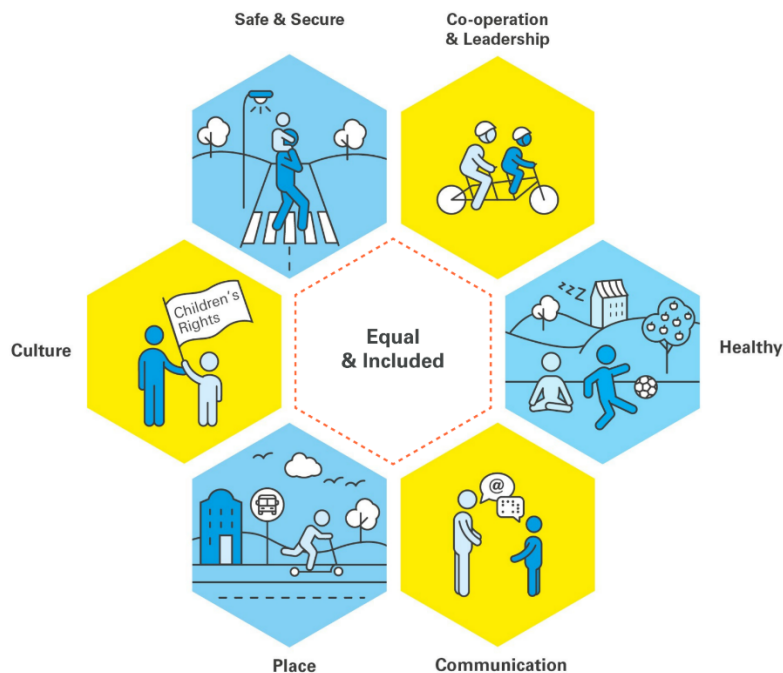
2.0 Background

- 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 In line with our badge selection and the UNCRC Manchester will be a place that has demonstrated how more children feel safe, heard, healthy and can connect with their local neighbourhoods.

3.0 Main issues

Our badge selection

- 3.1 Taking in to account the findings from our Discovery phase, our Discovery Day and existing data the children and young people of Manchester proposed the following badges to form our city-wide action plan.



3.2 Safe and Secure (Lily's poem - <https://youtu.be/2kRCOFc-vng>)

- 3.3 Throughout our discovery phase **Safe and Secure** was the number one topic that Children and Young People told us was important to them. It ranked highest in our discovery moment activities. Through thorough analysis of our findings we have a good understanding of why young people don't feel safe. Young people have told us what a lack of safety feels like, how it inter-connects to different issues and concepts that effect their lives.
- 3.4 Our badge lead sits within the Community Safety Partnership and with the support of other badge members will oversee the successful delivery of the 'Safe and Secure' action plan.

5 Key priorities/outcomes from the Safe and Secure Action Plan are as follows.

- Children & Young People are able to influence policies and strategies relating to their safety and security

- Children and Young People feel Safe travelling through their neighbourhoods and across the city
- Align our Child friendly ambition with Our Child Centred Policing
- Work with children and young people to understand how we can make neighbourhoods safer
- Children & Young People have an active and meaningful involvement in strategies relating to their safety and security
- Improved street lighting in locations identified by Children and young people as unsafe at night (**sits across Place and Safe and Secure**)

4.0 Place

4.1 Throughout the 'discovery phase' children and young people spoke a lot about the need to move freely across Manchester and in their neighbourhoods. They want to be made to feel even more welcome in public spaces, such as parks, green spaces and out in their communities as summarised below.

- Transport featured highly in responses as children and young people said they often do not feel connected to their neighbourhood and city.
- Parks was another area that featured very highly in our discovery feedback. It is without doubt that children and young people value their parks and green spaces but felt there was further investment needed to improve play areas, and to maintain the overall cleanliness.
- During the consultation 57% of children and young people felt that their area wasn't clean, with regular reference to littering.
- Children and young people have continued to express their concerns around climate change and through the 'Place' badge we will continue to focus on addressing these concerns by taking collective action.

4.2 Our badge lead sits within the Neighbourhood Directorate and with the support of other badge members will oversee the successful delivery of the 'Place' action plan.

4.3 Key priorities/outcomes from the Place Action Plan are as follows.

- Children and young people live in safe, protected and clean environments with access to green areas.
- Children and young people have increased access to free play opportunities to meet their friends and enjoy themselves in their local area.
- Increase time spent by Children and Young People playing outdoors.
- Increase in number of Children and Young People who feel proud of their local area
- Greater awareness of Article 31 of the UNCRC ' Children and young people have the right to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts'

- Increase in playgrounds being designed and developed in collaboration with Children and Young People
- Increase in active travel, school streets, and other green initiatives co-produced with children and young people that will support our ambition to becoming zero carbon by 2038.

5.0 Healthy

Humaan's poem - <https://youtu.be/h0sWgwwMB5I>

- 5.1 Children and young people highlighted the need for more support around mental and emotional health. Feedback ranged from wanting more access to outdoor physical activities, the need for cleaner air and having someone to talk to do.
- 5.2 We know that having the best start in life, lays a solid foundation and is essential to securing a successful future. Many health challenges and inequalities in later life can trace their foundations in early childhood, with the poorest families experiencing the worst health outcomes.
- 5.3 The first 1,001 days from pregnancy up to the age of two are particularly critical for a child's development. A good education, and support for social and emotional development, are also important for future health and wellbeing.
- 5.4 Mental health for young people has also been frequently highlighted as a particular concern, exacerbated by the Covid19 Pandemic.
- 5.5 Children and young people were very vocal about the need for more public spaces to be smoke free and were also expressed their concern about the use of vapes by their peers.
- 5.6 The issues raised by children and young people are evidently reflective of the Making Manchester Fairer Action Plan and therefore a key next step and priority will be to ensure the 'voice' of children contribute, inform, and support its delivery.
- 5.7 Our badge lead sits within Public Health and with the support of other badge members will oversee the successful delivery of 'Healthy' action plan and ensure alignment with Making Manchester Fairer.
- 5.8 The Key priorities/outcomes from the Healthy Action Plan are as follows.
 - Prioritise and improve mental health and outcomes for young people
 - Young people have more people to talk to and know where to get help when things are not going so well.
 - Reduce health inequalities in early years development
 - All children and young people report that they receive the support that they need for their circumstances, to understand and manage their mental and emotional health and wellbeing; and can access supportive, respectful, and compassionate services that understand their needs.

- Consider strategies/approaches to encourage a reduction in smoking in public spaces schools, playgrounds and other local services/facilities
- Children and young people from communities experiencing inequalities report that they are more able to influence and inform the development and ongoing delivery of health & wellbeing strategies.

5.9 Given the richly diverse population of Manchester, we believe it vital that **the Equal and Included** priority runs through everything we do in Manchester as a golden thread. Therefore, it will underpin all the Child friendly action plans and work to becoming recognised as a Child Friendly City.

5.10 Each of the respective action plans will reflect the following priorities / outcomes.

- Working in partnership in a coherent, strengths-based way to be equitable and support inclusive practice.
- Listening and responding to the voices of all children, young people and their families.
- Manchester will further develop frameworks and structures that enable all young people at neighbourhood, ward, and citywide levels to represent their view across a broad range of issues, initiatives, service design and delivery, this will be done through the establishment of Area Youth Forums.

6.0 Mandatory Badges

Co-operation and Leadership

6.1 Across the city people, organisations and civic leaders work together to make the city better for children and young people. Decisions are made involving children and young people.

6.2 Our badge lead is the Director of Children's Services and with the support of other badge members will oversee the successful delivery of the 'Co-operation and Leadership' action plan.

6.3 Action Plan priorities/outcome

- Children's rights, needs and views are incorporated into decision-making and are understood and valued by leaders within and beyond the council
- Multi-agency governance is established to oversee the implementation of children's rights across the city/community's decision-making and strategy.
- There is greater strategic collaboration and multi-agency cooperation between the council, third sector and private sector on issues relating to children and their rights.
- Children and young people are championed by Elected Members through planning and decision-making.

- There is greater strategic collaboration and multi-agency cooperation between the council, third sector and private sector on issues relating to children and their rights
- Introduce a Child's Rights Assessment section to scrutiny and executive decision making i.e. similar to the Our Manchester priorities/ Environmental Impact Assessment sections

7.0 Culture

7.1 Across the city people value and respect children and young people. People know about and respect children's rights

7.2 Our badge lead is the Director of HROD and with the support of other badge members will oversee the successful delivery of the 'Culture' action plan.

7.3 Action Plan priorities/outcomes

- 53% of children and young people didn't feel that they had a say in decisions affecting their lives
- The workforce across the city understand and can confidently apply children's rights
- A citywide children's rights workforce development plan is co-produced with MCC and key organisations that work directly and in-directly with children in Manchester
- Each organisation across Manchester identifies a children's right champion/lead
- Children's rights is embedded in strategies, policies, decision-making
- The Children's Rights Impact Assessment tool is fully understood and embedded across services
- Children's rights training is rolled out across the Council and Children's rights is incorporated into the MCC induction
- Measurable increase in the level of confidence Elected Members and practitioners across the City have in talking about and applying children's rights

8.0 Communication

8.1 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 made

8.2 Our badge lead is a Senior representative from the Communications Team and with the support of other badge members will oversee the successful delivery of the 'Communication' action plan.

8.3 Action Plan priorities/outcome

- All children and young people are able to access important council information relevant to them, including those with additional needs and those who speak English as an additional language

- Services and organisations who engage with young people feel informed about Children's Rights and able to communicate effectively with Children and Young People and their communication methods are shaped by Children and Young People
- More children and young people in Manchester know about children's rights
- Our methods of communicating with children and young people are accessible and inclusive and reach a wider range of children and young people
- Progress towards CFC recognition is regularly communicated to residents, staff, stakeholders and Children and Young People
- Work is done to increase more positive local media stories about Children and Young People

9.0 Delivery stage

- 9.1 Supported by our champions and ambassadorial network, the badge leads, and council will work with our partners and the local community, children and young people to deliver the Action Plan.
- 9.2 This will require a strategic cross-directorate and partnership approach as the programme aims to create a city where all children and young people have a meaningful say in, and truly benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives
- 9.3 In order to gain Child Friendly recognition an independent panel of children's rights experts assesses the progress made and decides whether to recognise Manchester as 'UNICEF Child Friendly'. This process usually takes between 2-4 years. It is our ambition to achieve this by 2026.
- 9.4 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)

10.0 Recommendations

- 10.1 The Children and Young People's Scrutiny is recommended to consider the report and priorities as chosen by children and young people
- 10.2 The Executive is recommended to

- To consider the observations of the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny
- To consider and sign off the badge action plan
- Endorse our progression to the delivery stage of the programme

Appendices

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

Appendix 2 Child's rights based approach and principles

Appendix 3 DRAFT Action Plans