

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019

Present:

Councillor Stone – in the Chair

Councillors Hewitson, T Judge [CYP/19/09 - CYP/19/12], Lovecy and Sadler

Co-opted Voting Members:

Mrs J Miles, Representative of the Diocese of Salford

Dr W Omara, Parent Governor Representative

Ms Z Stepan, Parent Governor Representative

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children's Services

Councillor Ollerhead, Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure

Professor Craig Harris, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning (MHCC)

Apologies:

Councillors Alijah, McHale and Madeleine Monaghan

Mr A Arogundade, Parent Governor Representative

Mr L Duffy, Secondary sector teacher representative

Mrs B Kellner, Representative of the Diocese of Manchester

Mr R Lammas, Primary sector teacher representative

CYP/19/08 Minutes

The Chair informed Members that the session on the number of children becoming Looked After, which had taken place the previous week, had been very useful and that the presentation slides had been circulated to all Members.

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2019.

CYP/19/09 Updated Financial Strategy and Directorate Business Plans 2019-20

Further to item CYP/18/63, the Committee received a report of the Chief Executive and City Treasurer which provided an update on the Council's financial position and set out the next steps in the budget process, including scrutiny of the draft budget proposals and Directorate Business Plan reports by the Committee.

The Committee also received a report of the Strategic Director for Children's and Education Services which set out in broad terms the directorate's key priorities, key activities and revenue and capital strategy for 2019-20; within the context of the Directorate Business Plan for the period 2017-20 and proposed savings. In addition, the report set out both the progress made to date in delivering identified savings and

focus for the final year of the three-year plan; refreshing the Directorate's Business Plan for 2018-20 in the context of changing resources, challenges and opportunities.

The Committee also received a report of the Director of Education which provided a summary of the confirmed Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) grant allocation from the 2019-20 settlement announced on the 16 December 2018 and the budget allocation across individual school budgets (ISB) and Council retained schools budget (RSB) which was reported to Schools Forum on 14 January 2019.

The Committee was asked to consider and make recommendations to the Executive on the budget proposals which were within its remit and to comment on the Directorate Business Plans which have been designed to ensure the Council invested in the services that were valued by its residents, achieving both high quality services and outcomes for residents as well as a balanced budget.

The Executive Member for Children's Services, the Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources and the Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure outlined the context of the reports, in particular the financial challenges the Council was facing. The Strategic Director for Children's and Education Services and the Head of Finance provided Members with an overview of the reports.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- To welcome the additional funding for Children's Services and to note the importance of budget saving targets being realistic;
- How inclusion of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) could be improved;
- To request information on how school funding per pupil had changed in recent years;
- That some schools had a significant underspend on their budgets, which could be utilised elsewhere; and
- To thank Executive Members and officers for their hard work in developing the draft budget proposals and business plans in difficult financial circumstances.

The Strategic Director for Children's and Education Services reported that there was an increased demand for school places for children with SEND and drew Members' attention to the work taking place to increase the number of places in special schools and alternative provision; however, he reported that the aim was that children with SEND be integrated into mainstream schools wherever possible. The Head of Finance reported that, while school funding had increased, the number of pupils had also risen. She informed Members that she would provide details of school funding per pupil in recent years.

The Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure reported that the Council had been working with schools which had a significant underspend on developing their plans for these funds and that, in some cases, schools had agreed to give the funds to the Council to re-allocate it to where it was needed.

Decisions

The Committee:-

1. Supports the draft budget proposals and the Children and Education Services Business Plan.
2. Supports the proposals set out in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) report, while noting that more funding was needed for the DSG, the High Needs Block and the Early Years Block and that Members would continue to lobby and challenge the government on this.
3. Asks the Head of Finance to provide details of school funding per pupil in recent years.

CYP/19/10 Children's Services Proxy Targets

The Committee received a presentation from the Deputy Director of Children's Services which provided proxy indicators on progress to improve children's services.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the presentation which included:

- Registrations for Early Help Assessments (EHAs);
- The reduction in referrals to children's social care;
- The reduction in the number of Children Missing from Home;
- The reduction in first time entrants to the Youth Justice System; and
- The formulation of the new Inclusion Strategy.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- That the way the information was provided in the scorecard was very useful;
- Request for clarification on the time period that the data related to;
- How children who were Missing From Education were tracked, particularly if they had left the city and their whereabouts was unknown;
- The capacity of the Early Help Hubs to expand to undertake more work; and
- When was the Inclusion Strategy due to be published.

The Deputy Director of Children's Services clarified that the data was a snapshot from a particular day, not aggregated figures. The Director of Children's and Education Services reported that the Council had a Casework Team which dealt with children who were Missing From Education. He informed Members that children who left the city remained on their caseload until the Council found out where they were, for example, if a new school requested their records or if it was confirmed that the child had left the country. He reported that the team undertook enquiries with a range of bodies, including the UK Border Agency, other local authorities and the police to locate children. He suggested that the Committee might want to consider having a report on the strengthening of the safeguarding arrangements in relation to this. He informed Members that Early Help was not a service but a way of working

and that the focus was on effective partnership working. The Executive Member for Children's Services informed Members about a recent school visit he had undertaken and advised Members that schools were already doing a lot of work to support families which was not currently recorded in the Early Help data. The Chair noted the value of visiting schools and reported that a date would be arranged for the Committee to visit St Brigid's RC Primary School.

The Strategic Director of Children's and Education Services reported that the Inclusion Strategy should be ready in time for the Committee's May 2019 meeting.

Decisions

1. To receive a report at a future meeting on the systems in place to safeguard children who are Missing From Education and whose whereabouts are unknown.
2. To receive the Inclusion Strategy at a future meeting.
3. To request that a visit be arranged to St Brigid's RC Primary School.

CYP/19/11 Edge of Care Services

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which provided an update on the services and interventions supporting children on the edge of care (at risk of becoming 'looked after'). The report covered the range of approaches utilised and the impact achieved from the services and interventions, and outlined new innovations being developed in Greater Manchester. The report addressed challenges and provided evidence of impact and value for money from the interventions.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:

- Governance and accountability arrangements;
- Value for money;
- The Edge of Care Panel;
- Edge of Care services and interventions;
- An analysis of admissions and discharges into the Looked After system;
- The impact from Edge of Care interventions; and
- New developments.

The Manager of Alonzi House outlined the services that Alonzi House provided to families whose children were at risk of becoming 'looked after' and provided anonymised examples of families that had been supported. She informed Members how staff built relationships with the families, listened to the views of the child and the parents to understand what was going on within the family and supported them to work through their problems.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- To welcome the good work outlined in the report and to recognise the important role of Early Help in improving outcomes for children;
- Request to visit Alonzi House; and
- To ask for an update on the implementation of the “No Wrong Door” model.

The Strategic Head of Early Help reported that Alonzi House already had a lot of elements of the “No Wrong Door” model. She informed Members that the Council would retain the best parts of Alonzi House’s current work but that this new model provided the opportunity to do more, for example, in relation to services for young people with complex mental health problems. She outlined the work taking place with partners to progress this and reported that this model was expected to be fully implemented by April 2019.

Decisions

1. To thank the Manager of Alonzi House for her hard work and to request that she and the Strategic Head of Early Help pass on the Committee’s thanks to all staff working at Alonzi House and in Early Help.
2. To request a further report in the new municipal year to update Members on the progress and impact of this work.
3. To request that a visit be arranged to Alonzi House.

[Councillor Stone declared a personal interest as a Regulation 44 Visitor to Alonzi House.]

CYP/19/12 Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

The Committee received a report and presentation of the Strategic Director of Children’s Services. The report and presentation provided information on the outcome of work by Manchester City Council, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning (MHCC) and Greater Manchester Police (GMP), in consultation with partners and existing Safeguarding Children and Adult Board members, to review existing arrangements, taking into account strengths, areas for improvement and opportunities to align with wider strategic objectives and plans.

The main points and themes within the report and presentation included:

- The case for change;
- The context and statutory requirements;
- The arrangements;
- The capacity to deliver;
- The budget; and
- Transitional and implementation arrangements.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee’s discussions were:

- To note that the proposed structure seemed quite complex and to request further clarification; and
- How GMP would be involved in this work.

Professor Craig Harris from MHCC reported that the proposed structure was simpler than the previous one. He reported that each Board had a lead organisation, with a lead officer assigned, and that the terms of reference and membership would be developed. He reported that the new arrangements brought together the Children's and Adults' Safeguarding Boards and would reduce duplication and enable members of these Boards to focus on strategic rather than operational work. He outlined the involvement of GMP in the new safeguarding arrangements. The Strategic Director of Children's and Education Services reported that GMP were aligning themselves to the Council's locality social work offices and would be building stronger relationships with the social work teams, which would have a positive impact in areas such as domestic abuse.

Decisions

1. To welcome the new safeguarding arrangements outlined in the report.
2. To request an annual report and an update report.

CYP/19/13 Overview Report

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme.