

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2019

Present:

Councillor Stone – in the Chair

Councillors Alijah, Hewitson, Kilpatrick, Lovecy, Reid and Wilson

Co-opted Voting Members:

Mrs J Miles, Representative of the Diocese of Salford

Ms Z Stepan, Parent Governor Representative

Co-opted Non Voting Members:

Mr L Duffy, Secondary Sector Teacher Representative

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children and Schools

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure

Apologies:

Councillors T Judge, McHale, Madeleine Monaghan, Reeves and Sadler

CYP/19/38 Minutes

The Chair reported that he had been in contact with Head of Youth Justice about the planned visit to Wetherby Young Offenders Institute (YOI). He asked the Scrutiny Support Officer to circulate details of the visit to the Committee Members.

Decisions

1. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2019.
2. To ask the Scrutiny Support Officer to circulate details of the visit to Wetherby YOI to Committee Members.

CYP/19/39 Skills for Life

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education which outlined the process, findings and next steps for the Skills for Life project which was piloted in 2018 - 2019 with a number of schools and settings.

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

- The background to the development of Skills for Life, which had originally been called Curriculum for Life;
- The Skills for Life pilot, including the evaluation process and findings;
- The Skills for Life branding;
- The Skills for Life launch; and
- Recommendations and priority actions for 2019 – 2020.

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

- To welcome this initiative and the work which had taken place so far;
- What was being done in response to the feedback from the pilot that online recording was preferred to paper-based records;
- That it should be rolled out to all Manchester schools, including independent schools;
- The role work experience could play in skills development and how this could be promoted; and
- The importance of ensuring that this was rolled out to Our Children (Looked After Children), particularly those who were not in mainstream schools, for example, those attending Alternative Provision.

The Skills for Life Project Officer reported that there had been strong feedback from the start of the pilot that those involved would prefer a digitised recording method to the paper-based records trialled in the pilot. She outlined the procurement process which was now taking place to develop an online recording system for Skills for Life.

The Director of Education informed Members that, although none of the schools involved in the pilot project were independent schools, the Council did have good links with some of the larger independent schools and could use this to trial Skills for Life in independent schools and could encourage them to promote it further with other independent schools through their networks.

The Skills for Life Project Officer advised Members that officers were already looking at how the Council could improve its work experience process, underpinning it with skills development, and that this could then be rolled out to other employers.

The Skills for Life Project Officer informed Members that foster carers had piloted the home challenges within the Skills for Life programme and had recommended that this be rolled out to all parents. The Strategic Director of Children's and Education Services informed Members that he would discuss with the Director of Education how Skills for Life could be incorporated into the contracts when Our Children were placed in non-Council-owned residential settings.

Decisions

1. To request a progress report in a year's time.
2. To request that the Council work to ensure that, as far as possible, all settings are involved in Skills for Life, including independent schools, and that officers look into how Skills for Life could be incorporated into the contracts when Our Children are placed in non-Council-owned residential settings.

CYP/19/40 Attainment Headline Outcomes 2019 (provisional)

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education which provided a summary of the 2019 provisional outcomes of statutory assessment at the end of the

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5.

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

- Provisional outcomes for all key stages;
- Contextual information;
- Pupil progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2; and
- Next steps.

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

- To recognise the hard work of staff and pupils;
- The impact of tests, including phonics tests, and a results-driven approach at a young age on children's well-being and love of learning;
- To request information in a future report on what percentage of Manchester schools were achieving the national average results or better and what was being done to support schools which weren't achieving this;
- What was the reason for the slight decline in outcomes at the EYFS and in the primary sector;
- To request that a future report provide further details on the population-related issues that were facing the city's schools, including population growth, international new arrivals and the traveller population; and
- To request that, when the validated outcomes at primary and GCSE level were confirmed, officers circulate a note to Committee Members with the headline information.

The Head of Schools Quality Assurance and Strategic SEND reported that the slight decline in outcomes at primary level had been in the reading scores and that this appeared to be due to the paper being longer than in previous years and some pupils not having developed the resilience to complete it. She informed Members how the new Ofsted Framework would shift the focus more towards the curriculum and the quality of education, including instilling a love of reading, rather than assessment data. She also outlined how the Manchester School Improvement Partnership facilitated the sharing of good practice and support between schools. She reported that further information on this could be provided in the next report on school attainment, provisionally scheduled for March 2020. The Director of Education informed Members that information on the school population, such as pupils arriving in and leaving the city partway through their education, would be provided in this report.

The Chair reminded Members that a briefing on the new Ofsted Framework would take place on 20 November 2019 at 5.00 pm. He encouraged Members to attend and requested that a copy of the presentation slides be circulated to all Members of the Council.

The Executive Member for Children and Schools outlined the achievements within the Early Years sector, including the embedding of the Early Years Delivery Model and 96% of Early Years settings now being judged as good or better by Ofsted;

however, he reported that further work was needed to address the gap in outcomes between Manchester and the national average and that this work would include a focus on wider issues in the family's life.

Decisions

1. To note the report and that the Committee will receive a further, more detailed report with the validated outcomes, provisionally scheduled for March 2020.
2. To request information in a future report on what percentage of Manchester schools are achieving the national average results or better and what is being done to support schools which aren't achieving this.
3. To request that a future report provide further details on the population-related issues facing the city's schools, including population growth, international new arrivals and the traveller population.
4. To request that the presentation slides from the Ofsted Framework briefing be circulated to all Members of the Council.
5. To request that when the validated outcomes at primary and GCSE level are confirmed officers circulate a note to Committee Members with the headline information.

CYP/19/41 Liquidlogic Case Management System – Implementation

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children's and Education Services which provided an update on progress, following the implementation of the new system.

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

- The rationale for change;
- Project delivery;
- Data quality;
- Benefits;
- Performance report building;
- Contingency arrangements for a focused visit and/or inspection; and
- Systems strategy.

The Service Lead (Leaving Care Service) gave Members a demonstration of the system.

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

- Whether the service was ready if Ofsted carried out a visit;
- Issues with data migration;
- Whether other agencies working with children, such as schools, would have access to the system;

- Whether social workers could use the new system on a tablet and, if so, whether this presented a risk of a data breach; and
- The impact on staff of moving to the new system.

The Strategic Director of Children's and Education Services informed Members that he had met with senior Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) regarding the issues with migrating to the new system, particularly the impact on producing performance reports, and that Ofsted understood that this was not unusual when moving to a new system. He reported that, when migrating from one system to another, the data categories were not the same, so officers had been working to resolve these issues. He advised Members that social work staff still had access to the old MiCare system to look at historical records but that, over time, this would no longer be necessary.

The Strategic Director of Children's and Education Services informed Members that giving other agencies access to the system could breach the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) but that in the future the service would look at how the Liquidlogic system could interface with systems used by schools to support practice, without breaching the GDPR. The ICT Strategic Business Partner reported that, with the right data-sharing agreements in place, Liquidlogic could be used to share appropriate information with partners in a way which had not been possible with the previous system, MiCare. He reported that, at present, social work staff did not have access to Liquidlogic through a tablet but that this would be reviewed in future. He advised Members that Council-issued devices such as laptops and mobile phones were already encrypted to ensure data was secure.

The Children's Social Work Team Manager reported that there had been a range of responses from staff to the introduction of the new system. She informed Members that some staff could already see the benefits of it, including those who had already used the system elsewhere, whereas others who were less confident in their computer skills were anxious about making a mistake and wanted to keep to the system they knew. She outlined the range of support that was being provided to staff to assist them in using the new system and that it would take time for some staff to get used to it.

The Deputy Director of Children's Services informed Members that the service had predicted and planned for the issues which had arisen, for example, in relation to data migration and levels of staff confidence in using the new system.

The Chair commented that this appeared to be an improvement on the previous MiCare system and advised that, while the Committee was not requesting a further report on Liquidlogic, it would be useful to have the impact of Liquidlogic on practice referenced in future reports.

Decision

To request that officers refer to the impact of Liquidlogic on social work practice in future reports to the Committee, where appropriate.

CYP/19/42 Leaving Care Service

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children's and Education Services which provided an update on progress and positive impact being made by the Leaving Care Service.

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

- An update on the workforce;
- Performance, assurance and quality of practice; and
- An update on key priorities of the service delivery plan.

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

- To welcome that the service had been brought in-house and the positive impact of this;
- Accommodation options for Our Young People (Care Leavers);
- How the service was engaging with young people who had already left care and making them aware of the support that was available to them;
- Mental health support and support for drug and alcohol issues;
- Advertising for mentors for Our Young People; and
- That these issues were also discussed by the Corporate Parenting Panel and that all Elected Members were Corporate Parents and should be encouraged to attend the Panel's meetings.

The Strategic Director of Children's and Education Services informed Members that Children's Services had been working with Strategic Housing colleagues to address the issue of young people being in unsuitable accommodation and, subsequently, in the last twelve months, none of Our Young People had needed to be housed in emergency accommodation. He reported that Our Young People were now prioritised for social housing and informed Members about the House Project, which would help to prepare young people for independent living. The Service Lead (Leaving Care Service) advised Members that all Our Young People had a £2000 first home grant, which they could use under the supervision of their allocated worker, and that this could be used for a deposit, where the young person was ready to have their own tenancy. He emphasised the importance of planning for young people's future accommodation and outlined the options, including 'staying put' with foster carers, living in supported lodgings and living in their own flat with floating support until they were able to live independently.

The Service Lead (Leaving Care Service) informed Members that Our Young People between the ages of 21 and 25 were encouraged to get in touch with the service for any support needs and that this would be promoted through the website and social media. He reported that 44 of Our Young People within this age group had got back in touch for support so far. He informed Members about the Health Priority Plan and the Health Service Development Plan which included mental health services and support for drug and alcohol problems. He reported that staff in the Leaving Care Service were able to seek advice from child psychologists in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) about young people they were working

with. He informed Members that the Our Young People who were experiencing difficulties were able to access support from the young people's mental health charity 42nd Street.

The Executive Member for Children and Schools reported that he had circulated information on the mentoring scheme to all Members of the Council but would do so again and that there was an event to match mentors with young people being held this month.

Decision

To receive a further report in 12 months' time.

CYP/19/43 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.