

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 9 October 2018

Subject: Leaving Care Service

Report of: Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

Summary

This report is to update members on the progress of activity to reform the delivery of Leaving Care Services for Manchester’s formerly looked after children.

Recommendations

Scrutiny committee members are asked to:

1. Note the successful decommissioning and transfer of the Manchester’s Leaving Care Service to Manchester City Council.
 2. Comment on the developments planned to improve the experiences and outcomes of ‘our’ children and seek a progress and impact report in the next municipal year.
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Wards Affected: All

Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Effective Children’s Social Care Services are critical to ensuring our most vulnerable citizens are afforded opportunities and supported to connect and contribute to the city’s sustainability and growth.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city’s economic success	Ensuring the most vulnerable in our society are supported and afforded the opportunity to access and achieve in the City; empowered and supported by the delivery of a strong and cohesive social care/corporate parenting system
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by	Improving social care services helps build the resilience children and families need to achieve

unlocking the potential of our communities	their potential and be integrated into their communities
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Improving outcomes for the children and families across the City, helps build and develop whole communities and increases the livability of the City
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Successful services support successful families who are able to deliver continuing growth in the City

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

None

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The previous report presented to Scrutiny Committee members in respect of Manchester's Leaving Care Service outlined the rationale to inform a decision that would lead the service from a commissioned service to a wholly owned trading company. The case for change was clear, an improved offer and excellent service for 'our' young people in Manchester that would continually improve the experiences of our young people in care and ensure that all our young people leave care with a positive sense of self image and have stability. We have engaged with local businesses, stakeholders and partners to help us co-parent our care leavers by providing opportunities and support as outlined in section 2.4.
- 1.2 Following the Executive decision on 30th May 2018 and the subsequent serving of the 'notice to terminate' the existing provider contract, the due diligence exercise was able to progress into detailed discussion. Throughout that process a number issues were highlighted.
- 1.3 Our young people co-presented at a care leavers conference in June 2018 to highlight what life is like for them and what would make a better service. The young people's asks and aspirations of creating a "corporate parenting family" is starting to show positive responses and engagement from partners. The decision to bring the service back "in house" prior to establishing a Wholly owned trading company has not resulted in any change in engagement or services offered to our young people and our ambition remains for our young people to make successful transitions into independent living and have the stability and security they need to progress and develop in all aspects of their lives. From 1st October 2018, Manchester City Council, will bring the service back in house.

2.0 Progress to Date

- 2.1 It is important to note, our underpinning primary objective to the proposed change was to accelerate positive outcomes for our young people, and the staged transformation of services to be 'Safe', to 'effective' and efficient, in line with the considerations. Further, a reason for the primary option being to establish the WOTC was the drive for greater scale and integration of services across Greater Manchester. However, circumstances on this work have also change since the initial option appraisal was carried out. The pace of the GM work has slowed and the local authorities who were interested to be part of the service have not committed to this yet and are unlikely to do so in the short to medium term. Therefore the immediate need to have a trading vehicle for this reason has diminished. Concurrently the opportunity to achieve the economies of scale in the delivery of back office infrastructure to the WOTC are not envisioned as being realisable in the short to medium term have necessitated revisiting the WOTC as the best value and 'safest' option at present.
- 2.2 Through bringing the service in house we will be able to focus on: moving to the provision of a excellent service; implementing a robust governance model

that involves our young people; and workforce development plans to provide a highly skilled and motivated workforce. This will then provide a strong platform for the future developments planned, including the establishment of the WOTC. Henceforth the transformation plan for the service over the coming months will follow a three phased approach, that being to first secure a safe service, with later stages to increase its effectiveness and subsequently refine its operations and efficiency:

1. 'Safe' transfer
2. Staff development/culture and expectations
3. Performance and impact

2.3 Subsequent to the revised decision made considerable activity has taken place to progress the safe transfer of the service to be led and managed by the City Council. The project work streams are as follows:

2.4 **Offers and Consultation with our young people** has continued throughout the process. An exclusive email account has been set up for our young people, which they can email and ask questions direct. All our young people have been advised of The Leaving Care service being delivered by Manchester city council, and we had the following comments:

“ I think it's a really good idea as our PA's will be part of Manchester” “ will everything stay the same , like our change group?” will there still be a board with a care leaver sitting on it”

2.5 Our young people views were that it was important to them to receive a consistent service post transfer. The main questions they asked was around entitlements and the change group continuing. The care leavers conference (June 2018) has led to a local businesses offer sports clothing from our young people. Barclays Bank are co-designing with Manchester City council a bespoke budgeting skills for our young people. In addition to mentoring and work/skills opportunities being developed via North West Business Leaders' Forum, Barclays are also providing an exciting opportunity by supporting young care leavers in the city. This is by use 'Connect With Work' program to put a bespoke 6 week course together for young care leavers in Manchester, with a guaranteed job at the end of it. Barclays will achieve this by working with businesses to understand their needs, agree what job opportunities we could then building this into the training that we provide. we were advised that this scheme has been running previously and Barclays have achieved excellent retention rates with the people that we have placed (most of whom are NEETs or with significant barriers to employment). Each course could have 20/25 young people on it.

2.6 We have had offers from other businesses such a wide range of companies that work on repairs and maintenance on behalf of clients, such as Housing Associations and Councils. This includes a variety of trades and skills such as plumbers, electricians, joiners, gas engineers etc. In addition, the administration side of things, such as planners, admin staff, HR, finance that would like to work with our care leavers on a offer. It is envisaged that our

young people will be given the opportunity to be involved in these meetings to enable active participation. The Youth Strategy and Engagement team will support the current members of the Change Group to develop as a reference group to influence the next phase of young care leavers participation in decision making across the City. The role of Vice Chair for the new Manchester Care Leavers Executive Board has also been ring fenced for a suitable care leaver to take up. This role and a standing item 'voice and experiences of our young people' on the agenda of the board will create systemic representation and contribution from our young people at the heart of key decision making; thus ensuring this is a service shaped and influenced by and for them. It is expected that the vice chair will work closely with the participation and engagement team to engage our care leavers both within and outside the City.

- 2.7 ***HR & Transactional People Services*** - This has included the TUPE transfer of staff into the City Council through a period of consultation, the establishment of payroll and pensions arrangements for the incoming staff group and the creation of the reporting structure and systems. Staff consultation has taken place. It has been agreed that the consultation period will be extended by two weeks after the date of transfer to allow further discussions over the transition to the extended 8.00am to 8.00pm operating model. The service will be suitably staffed to ensure consistency of service for our young people. In addition the new structure has 2 specialist social workers (child welfare and youth justice). We have recruited a senior Social worker and in the process of recruiting the youth justice social work post.
- 2.8 ***Finance*** - This has included both establishing the budget structure for the service and developing mechanisms to ensure the smooth transition of payments to young people. The associated budget for the Leaving Care service has been established. The annual cost of the commission was £1.4m. The cost of the new service is estimated to be £1.6m, the additional cost is fully funded and is as a result of expertise from existing resources being aligned to the new service. In the build up to the new arrangements associated with MCC's intervention leading to improvements in management oversight and grip of associated spend such as accommodation and support arrangements, has led to a reduction in overall spend and achievement of £200k budget saving. There are 46 fte posts in the budgeted structure, 32 fte are personal assistants, currently there are 28 fte in post, vacancies will be covered through agency.
- 2.9 ***Communications, Young People's Engagement & Participation*** - A priority for the second phase of transformation - Service Improvement - will embrace the Our Manchester principles and be built on strong consultation and engagement with our young people about what matters to them and will make a difference. An Engagement & Participation Lead Officer has been identified to re-define our approach and work with young people to design the forum and groups that will engage wider with our young people than the current approach and include them in the wider community of participation of manchester's young people in order to drive forward a shared vision and improvements for the service.

- 2.10 **Estates** - Corporate colleagues have supported Children's Services with the decommissioning of the current provider, who currently occupy an MCC building on a rental arrangement, and the return of the facility as a going concern to support the transition back to the Council and business continuity of the future Leaving Care Offer. In parallel we have completed a health and safety assessment and our Estates department have identified further buildings options that could be potentially used as new care leavers building. However, this will be phase two of the project and consultation with 'our' young people.
- 2.11 **ICT** - Similarly, ICT colleagues have worked to ensure a smooth transition from the external provider to the use of in-house equipment and systems. With the aim being to make the transition as smooth as possible in the interests of ensuring the best environment for the staff group. All staff will be provided MCC laptops and mobiles in readiness for transfer on 1st October 2018. ICT 'floor walkers' and Micare trainers will be available to support staff and ensure business continuity. Agreements have been drafted with Barnardo's to provide historical data as an interim measure, with a view to then migrating this data to MCC systems before the end of December 2018.
- 2.12 **Workforce Development, Policy, Practice and Procedure** - Alongside the project to move the service into MCC, the Strategic Lead for Leaving Care and Head of Quality Assurance and Safeguarding, have been active in preparing a comprehensive training and development programme for the staff which will begin upon transfer and induction into MCC. A social worker will be joining the service on day 1 and work with the staff on staff development by creating systems for group supervision with personal advisors and start to implement training on the new practice guidance on improving quality of pathway plans. This is also underpinned by an exciting development to create a bespoke accredited training programme for Personal Advisors that will offer a qualification on completion, and potentially be a national first for this role. This will be delivered in partnership with the Greater Manchester Social Work Academy. Staff will be provided training by the Social worker on practise standards and the Manchester policies.

3.0 Summary

- 3.1 As indicated in the report presented to Manchester City Council Executive on 30th May 2018 and within this report, it was until contract termination was served that the service was able to appraise the full extent of the service readiness, requirements and resources to successfully establish a WOTC for Manchester's Care Leavers. Those issues are now understood and the associated requirements and impact have been scoped and costed, giving rise to the decision to bring the service in house. This reflects the context of our first priority to improve outcomes for our young people, Whilst he evidence and benefits from a WOTC is ultimately the right model, the removal of the more immediate need to establish a trading vehicle has enabled us to rethink how the improvements on outcomes can best be achieved.

- 3.2 In conclusion, through the service in house we will be able to give greater focus on driving the quality of the service to deliver an excellent service to our young people, a robust governance model that involves our young people; and workforce development plans to provide a highly skilled and motivated workforce. This will then provide a strong platform for the future developments planned, including the establishment of the WOTC which is cost effective,value for money and sustainable.
- 3.3 At the time of writing the project is on track to deliver the safe transfer of the service into MCC on 1st October 2018. A verbal additional report will be provided to committee directly on the first week of operations.