

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 10 January 2006

SUBJECT: Children and Young People's Plan 2006-09

REPORT OF: The Director of Children's Services

CONTACT OFFICERS:

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To bring Members up to date with the development of Manchester's first Children and Young People's Plan, to seek comments on and overall endorsement of the final draft version. (For reasons that are set out in the body of this report, the final draft version of the Plan will be circulated to Members separately and as early as possible in January).

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Towards Unified Children's Services – report to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (15/7/03) and the Executive (23/7/03)

The Children Bill 2004 – report to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (6/4/04)

Integrating Children's Services – progress report – report to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (6/4/04)

Every Child Matters – overview of national developments and implications for the local change programme - report to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (8/2/05)

LOCATION

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1. Background

- 1.1 Members will already be aware that the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) is one of the new statutory requirements set out in the Children Act 2004. Like all areas, Manchester must have a Plan in place by the end of March 2006. The duty to produce the plan falls within the remit of the Director of Children's Services although it must be produced with partners. It replaces 16 statutory and non-statutory plans, most of which come from the education sector (e.g. the Behaviour Support Plan, the Education Development Plan).
- 1.2 The plan will be the single, strategic, overarching plan for all local services for children and young people. It should set out the agreed vision for children and young people in the area and identify children and young people where outcomes need to be improved and how this will be achieved. It should not be a detailed operational plan and must be underpinned by business plans.

2. Progress

- 2.1 The Children's Board published a consultation draft of the CYPP on 14 October 2005 and it is still available on the City Council website:

www.manchester.gov.uk/education/cypp/

- 2.2 A wide ranging of consultation process continues, including with children and young people. The main elements and a summary of comments so far are summarised below. The next stage is to produce a final draft version of the Plan early in January. This will be circulated to Members of Scrutiny Committee separately from this report.
- 2.3 Between January and mid-February there will be a process of fine-tuning of the Plan while at the same time seeking formal endorsement from a number of key partners such as the Boards of the Primary Care Trusts. The Plan will go to Executive for final approval on 15 March 2006.
- 2.3 It is important to note that the Plan will be a living document right up to the point it is submitted to Executive. In particular, it will be important the Plan is consistent with the outcomes of the self assessment process between now and the end of February that will feed into Manchester's forthcoming Joint Area Review. Government guidance indicates that they expect the first set of Plans to be in part developmental. In other words, some aspects of the Plan will require further work to be clear on what action is required. In these instances, the Plan must make clear how this work will be undertaken.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The consultation process has a number of dimensions:
 - The draft of the CYPP has been made widely available through extended circulation and the Internet. A response pro-forma has been provided several agencies, individuals and groups have responded;
 - Existing networks and meetings have been used wherever possible. So for example, the Plan has been discussed within the established consultation

arrangements for schools and through the hierarchy of team meetings within services.

- The Children and Young People Partnership has recently been restructured into a single main group and sub-groups based on the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes (be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, positive contribution and economic well-being). The first meetings of the sub-groups have focussed on the CYPP and they will continue to have a central role in developing, implementing and monitoring the Plan.
- 3 special partnership events have been organised this year to examine how the statutory and non-statutory sectors can work better together to improve outcomes for children and young people. The second of these events took place in November and focussed entirely on discussing and commenting on the consultation draft of the CYPP.
- A range of activities to engage children and young people in the CYPP, coordinated on behalf of the Children's Board by the Children's Fund. Activities have included:
 - a collation of the outcomes of consultations that have taken place over the last two years;
 - district based events linking school councils and the Manchester Young People's Council;
 - a questionnaire undertaken in the assemblies of 12 primary schools;
 - six focus groups at different ages, targeted activities for specific groups such as disabled children, asylum seeking children and young people not in education, employment or training;
 - a project definition workshop of 12 young people to help determine a longer term engagement strategy.

3.2 The consultation process is still active, but some emerging headline themes are emerging:

- overwhelming support for the vision of the CYPP and increased integration of children's services;
- the tone of the Plan is too negative – there should be a greater emphasis on play and participation in cultural, sporting and leisure activities;
- there is a strong consensus regarding the importance of supporting parents and families, especially in respect of communication and self-esteem;
- the content of the Plan is currently weighted too much towards local authority services;
- the structure is generally supported but most think the Plan is currently too long, has an inconsistent style and is difficult to read in parts.

3.3 The early headlines emerging from the consultation with children and young people are:

- the need for more local opportunities to take part in active leisure and play is given a high priority;
- friends and family are most important for good mental health;
- concerns about safety are high and 1 in 10 primary aged pupils surveyed said the **never** felt safe;
- there are high levels of concern about alcohol misuse, a desire to ban smoking, and a reported need for more sex education;
- secondary aged young people reported feeling intimidated by older peers as a key factor in how safe they feel;

- There were divided opinions over whether schools should provide a range of community services;
- better school facilities and playgrounds, a wider variety of activities at school and support for starting secondary school were all given a high priority;
- when asked how often they felt they had a say, about 60% of children and young people said either never or only sometimes;
- young people place value on increasing work experience opportunities.

3.4 The final draft of the CYPP will need to take account of these comments.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Members are asked to note the progress in developing the CYPP and the process over the next 3 months, and to comment on the final draft of the CYPP, which will be circulated as early as possible in January. Members are also requested to endorse the overall direction of the Plan, accepting that some aspects will require further definition.