

---

Meeting	Children, Education And Communities Policy And Scrutiny Committee
Date	5 January 2021
Present	Councillors Baker (Chair), Webb (Vice-Chair), Daubeney, Fenton, Fitzpatrick, Heaton and Hook (Substitute for Cllr Barker)
Apologies	Councillor Barker

---

#### **64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests, not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in respect of business on the agenda. Cllr Webb declared a non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 6 [SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) Annual Report] as he worked at a faith school. There were no further declarations of interest.

#### **65. MINUTES**

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous committee meeting of held on 1 December 2020 be approved as a correct record and then be signed by the Chair at a later date.

#### **66. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

#### **67. 2020/21 FINANCE SECOND QUARTER MONITORING REPORT**

Members considered a report that analysed the latest performance for 2020/21 and forecast the financial outturn

position by reference to the service plans and budgets for all of the services falling under the responsibility of the committee.

The Head of Finance (Adults, Children & Education) and Corporate Director of People were in attendance to present the report. The Head of Finance (Adults, Children & Education) advised Members that there was a net overspend of £2,595k was forecast primarily due to children's social care. He highlighted that:

- In addition to the effects of Covid-19, the Home to School Transport budget was already in a historic overspend position of approximately £200k. The savings targets for the SEN element of home to school transport had not been achieved because of a growth in the number of pupils/students requiring transport and the specialist requirements of that transport.
- The Designated Schools Grant (DSG) position at 1st April 2020 was a deficit of £4.865m. Current predictions on High Needs and Central Services Block expenditure indicated that this deficit could grow to £10m by the end of the financial year, due to the continuing increase in High Needs numbers, and increasing complexity, requiring expensive provision.

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Finance (Adults, Children & Education) and Corporate Director of People explained that:

- An audit of the support plans for children found that a proportion need increasing protection. This rise was typical of an improvement journey and the numbers in the child protection system had significantly reduced, as had the numbers coming into the system.
- As part of the improvement journey a multiagency hub was created in August 2019. This had been kept under review and the quality of practice was much better.

- It had to be ensured that placements were right for the child. There was a permanence strategy in place. This would either be reported to this Committee or the Corporate Parenting Board.
- The process by which placements were match through social work and care planning.
- Concerning the numbers of children placed in an extended family setting, this was individual to the needs of the child and their journey through the care and support process.
- The rationale for residential schooling was made in the interests of the child and not for financial reasons. There were 8 children in transition back to a York setting for a 38 week a year placement.
- The transition from a 52 to 38 week placement was dependent on the needs of the child and there was a range of interventions offered for the transition process.
- The proportion of additional costs incurred offset by government funding was £1.2m in this monitor.
- The temporary and agency staffing position would continue to the end of year and would contribute to the variations.
- Expenditure was only where required and spend was high in placement spend and staffing costs as a high proportion of young people in placements were aged 15 or above. The staffing position was challenging and the council was growing its own frontline social worker. An update on this was given.
- Clarification was given on contacts contracted out of York.
- The overspend on legal fees was due to the legal costs of children being on proceedings.
- The DSG was used for variety of areas agreed with the Schools Forum.

- Lobbying for the SEND review was undertaken by a number of organisations including the Association of Directors of Childrens Service and the Local Government Association. DfE colleagues had advised that this was a priority and was imminent. It was noted that there was a SEND Board of which a parent and carer group was an equal partner on the Board.
- Benchmarking with other councils had begun.

Following questions Members then;

Resolved: That the update on the latest financial position for 2020/21 be noted.

Reason: To be updated on the latest financial position for 2020/21.

## **68. SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

Members considered the end of calendar year report from Independent Scrutineer to City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP) to December 2020, written by Professor Maggie Atkinson, Independent Scrutineer. The report covered work done on the independent scrutiny of the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP). The Independent Scrutineer explained the changes to the governance of the partnership noting that that it now had a rotational Chair. The previous Chair, Simon Westwood was thanked for his work during his six years as Chair.

The Independent Scrutineer explained the content of the report, which reflected the work that continued across York to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the city's children and young people during the COVID-19 pandemic starting from the first lockdown. It concerned itself with reflections in partnership terms rather than focusing on single services or agencies, and that work being done largely by people working remotely and virtually, not face to face.

In response to Member questions and comments, the Independent Scrutineer clarified that:

- The role of Independent Scrutineer was a requirement

- There was a need to listen to what groups were saying in terms of needing support for mental health and resilience
- There was a need to support families as early as possible through early help, which included help for schools
- Regarding Member concern about children and families falling under the radar, elected Members needed to make the channels of communication as open as possible to their communities. The impact of the pandemic on families was acknowledged and the Corporate Director Children Education and Communities noted the increased requirement for early help support. She noted that services were available 24/7 and urged members of the public to get in touch for support
- Future reports would be strongly influenced by data and narrative to support the data
- There was a SEND Improvement Board and Safeguarding Board
- Strategic leaders were aware that there was a long waiting list for mental health treatment following referral
- Concerning areas needing improvement, there was work to be done on information sharing between agencies, and services were aware of this

Concerning the York Safeguarding Partnership Bi Annual Update Report, the Chair noted that the SEND review, Ofsted partnership working and sharing information had been put forward as areas for inclusion in the update report. In response to a question from the Chair, the Corporate Director Children Education and Communities advised that a toolkit for children and young people presenting with harmful sexual behaviours had been created. The Chair welcomed receiving the update report following its completion in April.

Resolved: That the end of calendar year report from Independent Scrutineer to City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP) to December 2020 be noted.

Reason: In order to be kept up to date on independent scrutiny reporting to City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Maggie Atkinson was thanked for her report and left the meeting at 18:58.

**69. SACRE (STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION) ANNUAL REPORT**

Members considered the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report 2019-20 Annual Report. This covered the 2019-20 academic year. The Head of Secondary and Skills was in attendance to present the report. He noted how RE work in schools had been impacted by the pandemic. He explained that the York SACRE was part of the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (NASACRE). He advised Members of the role of SACRE in advising on collective worship in the city and in agreeing the 2021-25 RE syllabus, which was had been considered by the SACRE at their Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC).

The Head of Secondary and Skills thanked the previous Advisor, Clerk and Interim of the SACRE for their work. He explained that SACRE sat within the formal council meeting structure. He outlined the content of the report noting that the SACRE was moving forward with the development plan and monitoring of RE. In response to a question concerning raising the profile of SACRE he explained that it was a formal statutory committee of the council.

The Chair thanked the Head of Secondary and Skills for his update and he left the meeting at 19.19.

[Cllr Hook left the meeting at 19:20]

Resolved: That the 2019-20 SACRE Annual Report be noted.

Reason: To update the committee on the work of SACRE and the outcomes in religious education in York's schools, in line with the statutory requirement to report annually to elected members.

## 70. **WORK PLAN**

Members considered items for future meetings. It was noted that Young People not in education, employment or training (NEET) would be considered at the commissioned joint scrutiny meeting with the Economy and Place Policy and Scrutiny Committee on 1 February 2021.

Resolved: That the following items for the forum meeting on 2 March 2021 be put forward as part of corporate scrutiny work planning:

- Update in Early Years and Nursery provision
- Recovery and mental health in schools

Reason: In order to keep the committee's work planning up to date

Cllr R Baker, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.29 pm].

This page is intentionally left blank