

Meeting	Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	20 December 2022
Present	Councillors Daubeney (Chair), Webb (Vice-Chair), Fitzpatrick, Heaton, Orrell, Hollyer and Daubeney (Chair)
In Attendance	Councillor Waller - Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education Andrew Daly - Chair, York Schools & Academies Board
Officers Present	Martin Kelly - Corporate Director of Children and Education (DCS) Pauline Stuchfield - Director of Customer and Communities Maxine Squire – Assistant Director of Education Richard Hartle – Head of Finance Children, Education & Schools Dan Bodey - School Inclusion Advisor

17. Declarations of Interest (17:30)

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 personal interest to agenda item 5 (Behaviour and Attendance - Mainstream Primary and Secondary pupils), in that the Chair York Schools & Academies Board, who was presenting the report, was his manager.

Cllr Daubeney declared a personal interest, in relation to items 4 (York Citizens' Theatre Trust Scrutiny Report) and 6 (2022/23 Second Quarter Finance Monitoring Report - Children, Education & Communities) as he was a city council observer on the Board of Trustees for York Citizens Theatre Trust and was a director of Work with York, which procured professional staff within children's services for York.

Cllr Waller declared a personal interest in relation to item 5 as he was a governor at York High School and at Westfield Primary School.

18. Minutes (17:32)

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 1 November 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

19. Public Participation (17:33)

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

20. York Citizens' Theatre Trust Scrutiny Report (17:34)

Resolved: That the item be deferred to a future meeting.

Reason: To enable a representative of the Theatre Trust to attend.

21. Behaviour and Attendance - Mainstream Primary and Secondary pupils (17:34)

Members considered a report which described the current position around exclusion and attendance across the primary and secondary phase in York and identified key priority areas for current and future support work.

The Assistant Director of Education and Skills, the School Inclusion Advisor and the Chair of York Schools and Academics Board (YSAB) presented the report and noted that attendance numbers were continuing to be difficult to recover following the pandemic but had improved, and permanent exclusion and suspension rates have risen this year. They stated that permanently excluded children cause a reduction in provision for Special Educational Needs students and can cost the Local Authority system £370,000 for the remainder of their life. They provided details of the support the Council and YSAB have provided to reduce the number of exclusions, including a

£150,000 investment in a support centre at York High School and a strategic placement of the Wellbeing in Mind team in the West area of the City, amongst others.

In response to a range of questions from Members, the Officers noted that:

- The support centre worked to reduce exclusions through a positive behaviour system and placed students into small groups with staff to give them the skills and resources to re-enter mainstream education.
- Fewer students had been placed in Danesgate due to increased routines of access to other services and clearer admissions policy, amongst other factors, but this change in the system has not received pushback from other schools. This had allowed them to deliver small group provision and run a curriculum model where students received a more focussed provision.
- There are over 20 alternative private provision providers, including Evolve, Ad Astra and Build Country Classrooms, and they were quality assured. The governance on these provisions was provided by Ofsted.
- The Fair Access Protocol ensured that the Council should find the best solution to the needs of permanently excluded children and decisions on this are made monthly.
- YSAB have invested £100,000 in appointing two Council posts to widen the attendance team, which will help support the Research School and model the early help strategies.
- The Council and YSAB were analysing attendance rates for children who were in receipt of free school meals and were employing the early help model to implement early intervention measures and investigate the causes while investing £105,000 in the School Wellbeing Services until 2026.

Resolved: That the report was noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee fully discharges its responsibilities in relation to behaviour and attendance in schools.

22. 2022/23 Second Quarter Finance Monitoring Report - Children, Education & Communities (18:19)

The Committee considered a report that analysed the latest performance for 2022/23 and forecasted the financial outturn position by reference to the services plans and budgets falling under this committee's responsibilities.

The Head of Finance, Children, Education and Schools presented the report and referred Members to Table 1 of the report. It was reported that there was a projected net overspend of £7.8 million which was primarily due to pressures within children's social care but the Officer stated that the third quarter finance report should be a significant improvement from the Council's position in the second quarter, with improvements in children's social care and safety valve work, amongst others.

The Corporate Director of Children and Education, the Assistant Director of Education and the Head of Finance then responded to a number of questions from Members covering the projected overspends, access to schools in York, dental access, accommodation for care leavers, and social worker agency work. It was reported that:

- The provision of home to school transport was one of the areas in which reduction in spending could be made and the Council needed to complete a full assessment of the impact of removing the Tadcaster bus service and they will be starting consultation on this in January 2023 but it will take 5 years to deliver the full savings.
- The Council plans to see savings in children's social care, the packages of care, transport, and safety valve work in the third quarter.
- The number of agency social workers had reduced by 50%.
- The Council works with strategic health partners and foster carers to ensure children in care were receiving dental checks.
- The number of care leavers in suitable accommodation has decreased and this can be attributed to the available suitable accommodation in York but the Council are looking at this issue as a priority.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the Committee on the latest financial position for 2021/22.

23. Implementation of recommendations from Scrutiny Reviews on School Holiday Food/Community Hubs and Holiday Activities & Food Update (18:41)

The Committee considered a report that provided Members with an update on the implementation of the approved recommendations arising from two scrutiny reviews completed by the Committee and contained an update on the current 3-year Holiday Activities & Food (HAF) programme.

The Director of Customer and Communities presented the report and noted that the cost of living crisis was a priority for the Council so funding has been allocated to the Household Support Fund to provide food vouchers to families with wrap around advice and this funding will continue into 2023/24. She stated that several community organisations have recently been awarded grants from the Council and were focussed on supporting residents with financial inclusion, food poverty, loneliness and isolation, and warm places.

The Director of Customer and Communities and the Assistant Director of Education then responded to a number of questions from Members and reported that:

- Council staff and volunteers are being supported by the Council through various methods, including through the Volunteer Hub.
- The HAF programme supplies additional funding to bring in new providers and support activities.
- The Council are focussing on developing new activities for older teenagers and are in the process of making access to HAF programmes easier.

Resolved: That the content of the report was noted.

Reason: To raise awareness of progress of approved CEC Scrutiny recommendations and the HAF Programme.

24. **Family Hubs Transformation Programme (18:57)**

The Committee considered a report that provided Members with an update on the Family Hubs Transformation Programme, its funding and workstreams, and what it means for York.

The Corporate Director of Children's Services presented the report and explained that a Family Hub system was a system-wide model of providing family support services, who work with children pre-birth into early adulthood. He noted that York received £997k in funding from the Family Hubs Transformation Fund to undertake transformation work, which must be completed by the end of March 2024 and will help improve access to services, improve connections and put relationships at the heart of family health. He also stated that Family Hubs are also being developed alongside the community and autism hubs, and work streams, such as information strategy and workforce developments, are key for this.

In response to questions from Members, the Corporate Director of Children's Services reported that:

- Family Hubs will provide some of the same services previously offered by Sure Start and Children Centres but they are more inclusive for children of all ages.
- Branding for Family Hubs was important to attract all members of the public.
- Work and communication with other organisations and agencies will be vital in providing the best help for families.
- The Council are looking at their assets to figure out where the Family Hubs would be built to ensure inclusiveness.

He also agreed to provide the Committee with an update on Family Hubs every six months, or earlier if needed.

Resolved:

- i. That the information in the report is noted.
- ii. That the Committee receives bi-annual updates on the development of the Family Hub Model.

Reason: To keep the committee updated and inform the scrutiny work plan.

25. Work Plan (19:19)

It was noted that the Committee was unable to receive the Ofsted Area SEND re-visit report in January 2023 and will receive it at a later date.

The York Citizens' Theatre Trust report was not considered at this meeting and the Chair agreed to receive this report at a later date.

Resolved:

- i. To receive feedback from the Ofsted visit above.
- ii. To receive the York Citizens' Theatre Trust item as described above.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee discharges its statutory duties and covers all items on the Work Plan.

Cllr S. Daubeney, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.22 pm].

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