

Meeting	Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date	14 January 2025
Present	Councillors Nicholls (Chair), Clarke (Vice-Chair), Crawshaw [from 6:01pm], Cullwick, Cuthbertson, Knight, Nelson, Waller and Melly (Substitute for Councillor Wilson)
Apologies	Councillors K Taylor, and Wilson
Officers in attendance	Pauline Stuchfield – Director of Housing and Communities Martin Kelly – Corporate Director of Children and Education Danielle Johnson – Director of Children’s Services Safeguarding Laura Williams – Assistant Director, Customer, Communities and Inclusion Maxine Squire – Assistant Director, Education and Skills Ian Cunningham – Head of Business Intelligence Hub Michael Cavan – Head of Children’s Resources Derek Sutherland – Head of School Quality Improvement

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### **39. Apologies for Absence (5:33pm)**

Apologies were received from Councillors Taylor and Wilson.

### **40. Declarations of Interest (5:34pm)**

Members were asked to declare at this point in the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest they might have in respect of business on the agenda if they had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. None were declared.

#### **41. Public Participation (5:34pm)**

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

#### **42. York Neighbourhood Model - Update (5:34pm)**

The Director of Housing and Communities presented the report and noted that the Neighbourhood Model had been approved by Executive on 12 December 2024, with the final plan expected to be approved in July 2025. The Head of the Business Intelligence Hub reported how the indicators used to split York into different areas were ever changing and updating.

In response to questions from members, the Director of Housing and Communities, Head of the Business Intelligence Hub, Assistant Director of Customer, Communities and Inclusion, and the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care confirmed that:

- Resources were not currently delivered on a ward level and this neighbourhood model proposal was understanding where resources were needed.
- There were desires for City of York Council (CYC) to work with Health on a shared outcomes framework.
- Hubs provided a good service when they were community led, but CYC did not want to force these upon communities where there was no desire. These developed successfully when organically created by communities adapting to change.
- The model would be best served by using partnerships that were already in place.

Resolved:

- i. That the Director of Housing and Communities, Head of the Business Intelligence Hub, Assistant Director of Customer, Communities and Inclusion would meet with the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Councillor Cuthbertson to discuss further plans for the Neighbourhood Model.
- ii. That the committee considered the detailed data included in Annex A of the report around the York Neighbourhood mapping model.
- iii. That the committee considered next steps regarding the implementation of the model and how the committee can be involved prior to the next report to Executive in Summer 2025.

Reason: to secure scrutiny member involvement in the development of future proposals.

### **43. Fostering Framework (6:09pm)**

The Head of Children's Resources presented the report and noted that the proposed framework to introduce a new fostering fee framework was to be presented to Executive on 11 February 2025.

It was reported that additional costs that would be experienced through this change would be levelled out over time, and that this would be a short-term investment to see long-term savings. The Head of Children's Resources continued to highlight how 90% of York's foster carers were paid at a level 3 fee which was much higher than the national average. The aim was to build a more balanced system, and a new skills and competency framework would help in reassessing carers.

In response to questions from members, the Head of Children's Resources, and the Corporate Director of Children and Education, and Director of Children's Services Safeguarding confirmed that:

- Improvements were being made to the online presence of City of York's fostering service, and there was a new marketing campaign which was due to begin on 13 January 2025.
- The most cost effective intervention was to see children go back to family after a period of time, which would be seen more by looked after children being placed locally in York.
- Making foster carers feel more supported would lead to an increase in carer retention and recruitment.
- In the proposed new system, payments would increase in line with CPI (Consumer Prices Index).

Members discussed the proposed framework, and it was moved by Councillor Crawshaw and seconded by Councillor Clarke that the committee would recommend that officers amend the proposed framework to include wording to say that any potential communication regarding the framework should be taken to an appropriate forum for children in care, before being published.

Resolved:

- That the committee recommended to officers that the proposed framework should contain wording to suggest that any potential communication regarding the framework should be taken to an appropriate forum for children in care, before being published.

- That the committee considered the proposals to introduce a new fostering fee framework, and supported option 3 detailed within the report, which would see an increase to fees across the board, improving the fostering offer for all carers.

Reason: To ensure City of York Council was competitive and attractive to potential new carers which would support its approach to meeting its sufficiency needs.

#### **44. Attainment Gap (6:50pm)**

The Head of School Quality Improvement presented the report and reported that York saw a pronounced gap in its attainment between non-disadvantaged and disadvantaged children because it was generally a high performing city, and that a lot of work had been done in reducing the attainment gap, especially through improved working with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities).

The Head of School Quality Improvement discussed how different factors effected York's statistics and noted how the makeup of York's disadvantaged pupils differed from the makeup of the national average – it was suggested that York's attainment statistics would not appear as poor if only data on White British pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) was included as nationally, White British pupils accounted for 59.7% of those eligible for Free School Meals; in York, this number was 84.9%. 40.5% of York's White British Pupils achieved Grade 4+ English & Maths, 4.8% greater than compared to 35.7% Nationally.

The Head of School Quality Improvement continued to highlight how research conducted by the Education Endowment Trust could help CYC's understanding of disadvantaged pupils, and how Early Talk for York had helped disadvantaged groups.

The Assistant Director, Education and Skills confirmed that CYC, along with a group of 40 other Local Authorities (LA) received the least amount of government funding and therefore did not have funds for additional intervention to the extent that many other LAs had.

Members discussed the data contained in the report and reasons behind York's attainment gap, and considered means of improving. Attendance issues and poverty being driving forces behind attainment was discussed, and the Assistant Director, Education and Skills confirmed that as LAs could no longer request in-year data from schools difficulties arose in planning what was coming through the system, especially where schools used different systems to record data.

Resolved:

- That the committee considered the report's contents and considered plans for ongoing scrutiny of the issues raised within the analysis of the data and the key priorities for improvement.
- That an update on the Attainment Gap would be received by the committee in a year's time.

Reason: To ensure that the committee fully discharges its responsibilities where a local authority must exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards Section 13A of the Education Act 1996.

#### **45. SACRE Annual Report (7:36pm)**

The Assistant Director, Education and Skills and SACRE Education Advisor presented the report and reported how York SACRE had experienced issues with quoracy over recent years, and that a move to hybrid meetings had improved this. It was also noted that York SACRE's Committee C had co-opted a new member this year.

The Assistant Director, Education and Skills and SACRE Education Advisor also noted that SACRE members were planning on visiting a secondary school within the year 2024-25 to follow on from their visit examining Religious Education at a primary school in 2023-24, and that the SACRE annual questionnaire garnered more responses this year than last year due to amendments made following feedback which was received.

In response to questions from members, the Assistant Director, Education and Skills and SACRE Education Advisor confirmed that:

- York SACRE had always had a Humanist member which was supported by the Census showing an increasing number of those who identify as of non-faith.
- Any religion could express an interest in joining York SACRE.

Resolved: That the committee received the SACRE Annual Report and noted the work of SACRE during the academic year, 2023-24.

Reason: So that members were updated on the work of SACRE during the academic year 2023-24.

#### **46. Work Plan (7:48pm)**

Members discussed the committee's workplan and it was;

Resolved: That members would bring to future meetings items of consideration for the committee's work plan for meetings scheduled for the 1 May 2025 onwards.

Reason: To keep the committee's work plan for the 2024/25 municipal year updated.

Cllr Nicholls, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.33 pm and finished at 7.55 pm].