
Meeting	People Scrutiny Committee
Date	9 July 2025
Present	Councillors J Burton (Chair), Waller (Vice-Chair), Clarke, Cuthbertson, Nelson, Runciman and Rose (Substitute)
Apologies	Councillors Mason, Moroney and Nicholls
In Attendance	Councillor Webb (Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education)
Officers Present	Maxine Squire – Assistant Director, Education and Skills Victoria Coyle – Head of Integrated SEND Guy Close – Democratic Services Manager
Visitors Present	Jennie Hitchen – Parent Carer Forum York representative

5. Apologies for Absence (5.33 pm)

Apologies were received from Councillors Mason, Moroney and Nicholls. Councillor Moroney was substituted by Councillor Rose.

6. Declarations of Interest (5.33 pm)

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.

7. Minutes (5.33 pm)

Members considered the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2025. An amendment was suggested to correct a duplication of the text of item 2 (Declarations of Interest) at item 3 (Public Participation).

Resolved:

- i. That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2025 be amended at item 3 to replace:
 - ‘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. Councillor Waller declared an interest in discussions under item 4, Work Plan, in that his partner worked for NHS England.’with
 - ‘It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council’s Public Participation Scheme.’
- ii. That subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2025 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

8. Public Participation (5.34 pm)

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council’s Public Participation Scheme.

Flick Williams, speaking remotely regarding Agenda item 5 (Update on the York Inclusion and Belonging Special Educational Needs and Alternative Provision Strategy 2025-2030), expressed concerns over ableist language and the potential impact of government policy on eligibility for support, noting competition for scarce resources, and warning that disabled children who were failed today would become unnecessarily dependent adults of tomorrow.

9. Update on the York Inclusion and Belonging Special Educational Needs and Alternative Provision Strategy 2025-2030 (5.38 pm)

Members considered a report presenting the committee with an early draft version of the Inclusion and Belonging Special Educational Needs and Alternative Provision Strategy (SENDAP) 2025-2030.

The Assistant Director for Education and Skills and the Head of Integrated SEND provided an overview, with contributions from a representative of Parent Carers Forum York. In response to questions from the committee it was noted that:

- The biggest risks to the strategy from the national level would be if the government failed to undertake a full financial impact assessment of its forthcoming proposals to ensure there was sufficient funding to make the changes a success; this would have an immediate and tangible impact, and it was important that changes were made cautiously and considerately.
- The strategy represented a local co-produced response with sufficient flexibility to adapt to anticipated national changes, with the emphasis on supporting children and young people in their local mainstream school.
- There was a focus on ensuring access to educational opportunities for children and young people who were not in school and engaging with families who were harder to reach. Feedback had been gathered and while there would be challenges there would be an emphasis on building trust and communication.
- In terms of reflecting real world experience, the strategy provided a broad framework, and an action plan to address specific issues would sit alongside it. This would entail a partnership response with early intervention at its core.
- The SEND family hub in Clifton was now in the implementation phase, with a formal opening event planned for 20 September. The hub had been designed to be accessible and easy to drop into, with the Parent Carer Forum hosting front of house navigators to help people feel better connected with services.
- With reference to the strategy's first pillar of changing society for inclusion, a recent conference on inclusion had been well-attended by school leaders and work was being done through a sub-group with teachers from the York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB) to help reset culture in schools. This was not just about funding; leadership and culture within schools was important while bringing parent and teacher knowledge together could help unlock learning for children.
- It was recognised that a better understanding was needed of the barriers to some children attending school; professionals did not have all the answers and families were often best placed to identify problems, and a strength-based approach would be taken to individual needs.
- There was optimism that health colleagues would remain fully committed to partnership working through the SEND Partnership and SEND remained a statutory function of the Integrated Care Board (ICB).
- Parent carer wellbeing had been a major theme for the Parent Carer Forum over the last few years, and the new hub would help more parents feel supported.

- The need to embrace a culture of inclusion as a city was emphasised, and the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education offered his thanks to education staff for the work being done in bringing partners together through YSAB.
- Consultation would continue over the next few months prior to the strategy being considered by Executive in October; it was suggested that further scrutiny might be considered once the national picture was clearer.

Resolved: To note the early draft of the Inclusion and Belonging, Special Educational Needs and Alternative Provision Strategy 2025-2030.

Reason: To keep the committee updated on the development of the Strategy.

10. Work Plan (6.54 pm)

Members considered the committee's work plan for the current municipal year.

With reference to possible Task and Finish groups, it was:

- Suggested that setting up no more than two Task and Finish groups per scrutiny committee within the municipal year would help maximise impact and available capacity, and noted that membership of a Task and Finish group was not limited to members of the parent committee. It was also suggested that Task and Finish groups should focus on issues from across the whole remit of the committee rather than all focusing on one area.
- Noted that two possible Task and Finish groups into the work of York Youth Council and repair service satisfaction had been suggested at the committee's previous meeting.
- Noted that following a motion approved by Council in March 2025, a Task and Finish group had been established by the former Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee in May 2025 to examine the proposed changes to long-term sickness and disability benefits; its membership consisted of Cllrs J Burton, Coles, Fenton, Runciman and Steward, and it was now felt more appropriate for this group to report to the People Scrutiny Committee.
- Noted that given the possibility of upcoming changes at a national level to Education, Health and Care Plans, there was little point at this stage in progressing with the proposed Task and Finish group into this subject inherited from the former Children, Culture and

Communities Scrutiny Committee; nothing would be lost as the group had not yet commenced its work.

- Noted that the work of the Task and Finish group considering Food Insecurity, which had also been inherited from the former Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee, was close to completion but some officer capacity was needed to assist with compiling a final report. It was agreed that this work could be completed without impacting on the choice of new Task and Finish groups.
- Suggested that the Chair and Vice-Chair should liaise to consider prioritisation of remaining proposed Task and Finish work.

It was noted that an informal meeting of the committee was being planned for September to further consider the allocation of work plan items.

The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education noted that work around York Hungry Minds and the Free School Meal Pilot was close to completion and would be ready to be considered by the committee in its preferred timescale and format.

It was noted that informal scrutiny briefings would provide opportunities to identify areas for further work. Members expressed a preference for holding briefings online in the interests of accessibility, and for avoiding hybrid briefings where possible; the Scrutiny Review Working Group would be considering this further.

Resolved:

- i. To note the work plan.
- ii. To approve the Task and Finish group on proposed changes to long-term sickness and disability benefits reporting to the People Scrutiny Committee.
- iii. To agree to the completion of the work of the Food Insecurity Task and Finish group for future presentation to the committee in a suitable format.
- iv. To not proceed further with the proposed Task and Finish group on Education, Health and Care Plans owing to the potential for upcoming changes at a national level.
- v. To further consider the allocation of work plan items at an informal meeting in September.

Reason: To keep the committee's work plan updated.

Cllr J Burton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.31 pm and finished at 7.25 pm].