

Meeting	Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	7 March 2023
Present	Councillors Daubeney (Chair), Webb (Vice-Chair), Fisher (Substitute for Cllr Hollyer), Heaton, Looker (Substitute for Cllr Fitzpatrick) and Orrell
Apologies	Councillor Baker, Fitzpatrick and Hollyer
In Attendance	Councillor Waller, Executive Member, Children, Young People and Education (until 6.06 pm)
Officers in Attendance	Maxine Squire, Assistant Director of Education Danielle Johnson, Director of Safeguarding Richard Hartle, Head of Finance Derek Sutherland, Head of Primary School Effectiveness and Achievement Laura Williams, Assistant Director of Customer, Communities and Inclusion Andy Laslett, Strategic Services Manager
External Attendees	Chris Edwards, Chair, REACH Michael Slavin, Interim Chief Executive, York Citizens' Trust Kathryn Blacker, Chief Executive, York Museums Trust Paul Lambert, Head of Strategy, Finance & Corporate Services, York Museums Trust

25. Declarations of Interest (5.32 pm)

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.

None were declared.

26. Minutes (5.32 pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 20 February 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

27. Public Participation (5.33 pm)

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

Flick Williams spoke on Agenda Item 7 (York Museums Trust), she questioned the lack of objection from the Trust regarding the Castle Gateway Project and the closure of the Castle Car Park, and shared her concerns that the closure and loss of the taxi / drop off point would prevent disabled visitors from visiting the museum.

28. School Improvement Update (5.36 pm)

The Assistant Director of Education, and the Head of Primary School Effectiveness and Achievement, introduced a report to Members which detailed school performance in 2021-2022 and the outcomes of disadvantaged children. They noted that there had been a dip in outcomes although the dip in York was lower than the performance nationally. They highlighted a better than the national performance for KS2 reading and noted that the Early Talk for York scheme was to be scaled across the city, where currently 80% of children had been screened. It was anticipated that embedded early intervention across all schools would sustainably close the gap for historically disadvantaged groups. Phonics was identified as an area that required improvement.

The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education emphasised the contribution the Early Talk for York scheme had already made and stated he looked forward to continuing improvements.

There followed a discussion between Members and Officers which covered phonics, reading and catch-up funding.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee discharges its responsibilities in relation to promoting high standards in education under Section 13A of the Education Act 1996.

[6.06 pm, Cllr Waller left the meeting]

29. 2022/23 Third Finance & Performance Monitoring Report - Children, Education & Communities (6.04 pm)

The Head of Finance introduced the performance monitoring report for the third quarter. He noted that the financial position has improved and identified the reduction in agency placements as one of the reasons for this. He expected to see a more significant impact in 2023/24.

Officers responded to questions from Members on the number of referrals in children's social care, the number of times children in care changed placements within a year and out of area placements.

It was reported that the local authority (LA) compared favourably to national figures and that there was continued progress in all areas, although there was still work to be done and it remained a priority.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated.

30. Reach Progress Report to the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee (6.12 pm)

Chris Edwards, Chair of REACH (Reconnecting Education, the Arts, Culture and Heritage), gave an update to the Committee on the project's progress to date.

He highlighted that they had over 60 partners, including CYC (City of York Council) and the Arts Council with the aim to develop an infrastructure supporting arts and creativity in schools that targeted vulnerable and early years children. They had worked with schools across the city on a range of projects within a range of arts disciplines.

He responded to questions from Members on creativity bags, arts on the national curriculum and the relationship between mental health and the arts.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee is kept up to date with the work of the arts project.

31. York Museums Trust Scrutiny Committee Report (6.55 pm)

Members received an update on the York Museums Trust from Kathryn Blacker, Chief Executive, and Paul Lambert, Head of Strategy, Finance and Corporate Services.

In response to questions from members they highlighted that due to a difficult funding position, the focus for the Trust was one of survival. They explained that they had worked with the University of York and York Explore to reach the wider community whilst they sought to rebuild the onsite head count. They would prefer to continue with free entry and had been looking at other revenue streams to achieve this.

It was noted that the Trust was responsible for both the city collections and some significant city buildings and the Trust continued to work towards improving accessibility and to become carbon neutral.

The letter of comfort from CYC had been beneficial in demonstrating confidence in the Trust and anything the Committee could do to support this further would be welcomed.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated in relation to the work of the Museums Trust.

32. York Citizens' Theatre Trust Scrutiny Report (6.45 pm)

Michael Slavin, the interim Chief Executive of the York Citizens' Theatre Trust, presented an update from the Trust. He reported

that it had been a difficult time for funding during the pandemic but that they had a strong programme of community work.

He responded to questions from Members covering the theatre's work with children and young people, the summer community production and the support available for young people and their mental health.

It was reported that the youth theatre was well-attended with good connections to the National Theatre. Work was ongoing to secure funding to diversify further and develop workshops to support young people's mental health

Resolved: That the update be noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated with the work of the Trust.

33. Chair's Closing Remarks (7.10 pm)

The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their contribution to the Committee.

Cllr S. Daubeney, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.11 pm].