



**Notice of a public meeting of
Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny
Committee**

To: Councillors Baker (Chair), Webb (Vice-Chair), Daubeney, Fenton, Fitzpatrick, Heaton and Barker

Date: Tuesday, 6 April 2021

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: Remote Meeting

AGENDA

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point, Members are asked to declare:

- any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests
- any prejudicial interests or
- any disclosable pecuniary interests

which they may have in respect of business on this agenda

2. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2021.

3. Public Participation

At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered to speak can do so. Members of the public may speak on agenda items or on matters within the remit of the committee.

Please note that our registration deadlines have changed to 2 working days before the meeting, in order to facilitate the management of public participation at remote meetings. The deadline for registering at this meeting is at 5.00pm on Wednesday 31 March 2021.

To register to speak please visit www.york.gov.uk/AttendCouncilMeetings to fill out an online registration form. If you have any questions about the registration form or the meeting please contact the Democracy Officer for the meeting whose details can be found at the foot of the agenda.

Webcasting of Remote Public Meetings

Please note that, subject to available resources, this remote public meeting will be webcast including any registered public speakers who have given their permission. The remote public meeting can be viewed live and on demand at www.york.gov.uk/webcasts.

During coronavirus, we've made some changes to how we're running council meetings. See our coronavirus updates (www.york.gov.uk/COVIDDemocracy) for more information on meetings and decisions.

- 4. 2020/21 Finance Quarter 3 Monitoring Report** (Pages 9 - 16)
This report analyses the latest performance for 2020/21 and forecasts the financial outturn position by reference to the service plans and budgets for all of the services falling under the responsibility of this committee.
- 5. Community Hubs Scoping report** (Pages 17 - 32)
This report presents information in support of a proposed scrutiny review of the roll out of the council's community hubs programme.
 - a) Community Hubs moving forward**
To discuss areas for a deep-dive review into the post Covid model.
 - b) Funding of Community Hubs model**
To discuss the funding of the Community Hubs model in reference to Annex 1 of the report to the item 5 above. Annex 1 is the Review of Ward Funding report presented to the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities at his Decision Session on 2 February 2021. It sets out a review of the use of ward funding during 2020/21 and identifies issues and opportunities for 2021/22.

6. Work Plan

To consider the Committee work plan for the next municipal year.

7. Urgent Business

Any other business which the Chair considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democracy Officer

Angela Bielby

Contact details:

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For more information about any of the following please contact the Democracy Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports and
- For receiving reports in other formats

Contact details are set out above.

This information can be provided in your own language.

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

 (01904) 551550

City of York Council

Committee Minutes

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].

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Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee

6 April 2021

Report of the Corporate Director of People

2020/21 FINANCE THIRD QUARTER MONITORING REPORT – CHILDREN, EDUCATION & COMMUNITIES

Summary

- 1 This report analyses the latest performance for 2020/21 and forecasts the financial outturn position by reference to the service plans and budgets for all of the services falling under the responsibility of this committee.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

- 2 A summary of the service plan variations is shown at table 1 below.

Table 1 – CEC Financial Projections Summary 2020/21 – Quarter 3

2020/21 Quarter 2 Variation £000		2020/21 Latest Approved Budget			2020/21 Projected Outturn Variation	
		Gross Spend £000	Income £000	Net Spend £000	£000	%
+4,983	Children's Specialist Services	22,117	2,663	19,454	+5,793	+29.8%
+164	Communities & Equalities	9,691	4,517	5,174	+179	+3.5%
+2,097	Education & Skills	16,804	4,942	11,862	+3,956	+33.4%
-1,437	School Funding & Assets	142,750	150,524	-7,774	-3,313	-42.6%
+530	Central CEC Budgets	1,842	5,996	-4,154	+247	+5.9%
-600	Children's Improvement Funding				-651	
-1,192	Covid 19 Funding				-1,192	
-1,950	Mitigations				-1,450	
+2,595	Total CEC Directorate	193,204	168,742	24,562	+3,569	+14.5%

+ indicates increased expenditure or reduced income / - indicates reduced expenditure or increased income

- 3 A net General Fund overspend of £3,569k is forecast primarily due to continuing pressures within children's social care budgets. In addition, the deficit balance within the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) projected to be carried forward into 2021/22 is £5,439k higher than budgeted for. The following sections provide more details of the major outturn variations.

Children's Specialist Services (+£5,793k / +29.8%)

- 4 The placements budgets are predicted to overspend by a total of £2,624k in 2020/21. This includes variances of £896k on Fostering (including Independent Fostering Agencies where there are 35 ongoing placements, an increase of 11 since the first quarter), £225k on adoption and other allowances and £1,503k on Out of City Placements. The fostering projection is based on all local foster carer positions being filled, so where a child reaches 18 or a foster placement ends, then it is assumed that this is filled. The IFA and Out of City Placement projections have taken account of the placements expected to end in 2020/21, with a further reduction expected in 2021/22.
- 5 The number of Looked After Children in York has increased significantly in the past 12 months. The Looked After Children population had been stable for a number of years, in the range 190-210 at any one time (this was significantly below statistical neighbour and national average). On appointment the new Directorate Management Team identified unsafe drift and delay for some children in the system. This was subsequently identified by Ofsted and corrective action has led to significant recalibration in the system. For example in October 2018 there were only 4 individual children in care proceedings. As at the end of September 2020 there were 55 sets of proceedings on 93 individual children in place. Whilst the recalibration of the system has led to an increase of children in care, children are safer as a result and work now is being done to safely reduce numbers to acceptable levels. An external review of our multi agency safeguarding hub (the front door to children's social care services) has confirmed that decision making and thresholds are now appropriate.
- 6 At the time of this monitor the Children & Young People in Care (CYPIC) number is 287 and within the next 3 years 25% of these will leave local authority care. A Reducing Service Costs Board has been established in Specialist Services chaired by the Assistant Director which will review arrangements to reduce CYPIC numbers safely, the effectiveness and impact of the Edge of Care Service, current Family Group Conference activity and progress on foster care recruitment. In addition a Strategic Overview of Permanence Group has been established, chaired by the Assistant Director to monitor the new Permanence Strategy through tight oversight of children with a plan of permanence and ensuring rigorous use of trackers in order to prevent delay and manage demand in the system.

- 7 A Track and Challenge exercise is also being undertaken on all young people in high cost residential placements which will also ensure education and health costs contributions where applicable are met. A Pathway for funding will be set up to include Health and Continuing Care funding. Children in residential are also being reviewed and those who need to be assessed with a view to returning nearer to York or 52 week placements in residential school to reduce to 38 are assessed.
- 8 Safeguarding Interventions are predicted to overspend by £1,304k, mainly due to increases in the Court and Child Protection Teams who are dealing with the increase in cases. For example in October 2018 there were only 4 individual children in care proceedings. At the end of September 2020 there were 55 sets of proceedings on 93 individual children in place. Legal fees are predicted to overspend by approximately £315k. Children protection numbers, following a recalibration spike, have now returned to national average levels.
- 9 Staffing budgets with Children's Social Work Services, including the Permanency and Referral & Assessment teams, are also predicted to overspend by approximately £1,321k. This is mainly due to temporary staffing across the service, which the directorate has worked hard to eliminate with permanent appointments. Use of agency staff is at a last resort. This could be for example to back fill maternity leave however managers must evidence that they have attempted to backfill with fixed term contract in advance of any agency staff being agreed. A revised structure which reduced the need for agency costs had been agreed just before lock down but has not been able to be taken forward during the initial phase of the pandemic. This is now being re activated.

Communities & Equalities (+£179k / +3.5%)

- 10 The majority of this variance is related to the projected costs of the Community Hubs which were set up at the beginning of lockdown and have transitioned into a new method of working. The cost for 2020/21 is now estimated to be in the region of £130k, which will be funded from Covid 19 emergency funding.
- 11 Adult Learning continues to see a reduction in course income. Total income losses are now estimated to be at least £190k, but savings in costs of delivering courses reduce the net loss to approximately £125k. A claim through the income compensation scheme for approximately £60k has been made and a further claim in Round 2 will be made. If these are successful then Adult Learning is predicted to have a small overspend of approximately £30k as a result of income losses that cannot be claimed plus a number of other minor variances.
- 12 The other main variance is an overspend of £24k due to a contribution made to the Head of Culture and Wellbeing post at Make It York, for which there is no budget provision.

Education & Skills (+£3,956k / +33.4%)

- 13 The Home to School Transport budget was already in an historic overspend position of approximately £200k. The savings targets for the SEN element of home to school transport have not been achieved because of a growth in the number of pupils/students requiring transport and the specialist requirements of that transport. The main increase in numbers have been at post 16/19 where, because of the city now being able to provide more specialist education provision for this group of students more locally, subsequently we have had to provide more transport to establishment such as York College, Askham Bryan, Choose 2 and Blueberry Academy. The changes in legislation to allow EHCPs to ages 19-25, resulting in significantly more students accessing this option, has significantly increased our transport spend accordingly.
- 14 In addition, due to the effects of Covid 19 and the complications and uncertainties created by the requirements for school transport and social distancing from September, it is extremely difficult to estimate the potential overspend at this stage. However, due to negotiations with providers, a reduction in contract payments was secured for the summer term, whilst still supporting the providers to remain in business.
- 15 This issue is common to all LAs with Home to School Transport responsibilities, and the Government has recognised this with the announcement of a grant to assist in funding these additional costs. City of York Council's allocation of this grant is £125k. It is not yet clear if further funding will be provided, and, if not, there may be a further impact on the budget, although the Directorate is currently working hard to contain additional expenditure to current spend levels plus the grant funding.
- 16 At this stage an estimated overspend of £211k has been included in the directorate projection, reflecting the effects of the historic overspend, the reduction in costs in the summer term, and some estimates of the likely position for the remainder of the financial year. This is still subject to change depending on the arrangements which may be required in the spring term due to Covid.
- 17 A staffing underspend of £39k is predicted across the School Improvement and Skills Teams due to vacant posts, however this saving is offset by an unbudgeted payment to the York Skills Board of £20k. Education Psychology is predicted to overspend by £72k, mainly on staffing.
- 18 The DSG budgets within Education and Skills (excluding Transport) are predicted to overspend by £3,251k, mainly due to the high number of Out of Authority placements (+£3,195k) and an overspend in the Specialist Teaching Teams of £147k, offset by some savings in the other SEND central team

budgets. These variances contribute significantly to the projected deficit position on the DSG.

Schools Funding & Assets (-£3,313k / -42.6%)

- 14 The net projected variation is made up of the following items:
- a carry forward deficit of DSG from 2019/20 that is £865k higher than budgeted for,
 - an estimated overspend on high needs costs of £1,261k, particularly in relation to Danesgate alternative provision and post 16/19 placements;
 - a projected deficit carry forward of DSG into 2021/22 which is £5,439k higher than budgeted for.
- 15 The DSG balance brought forward at 1st April 2020 was a deficit of £4.865m. Current predictions on High Needs and Central Services Block expenditure indicate that this deficit will grow to £10.439m by the end of this financial year, due to the continuing increase in High Needs numbers, and increasing complexity, requiring expensive provision. The main pressures are in Post 16/19 provision, Alternative Provision and the Out of Authority placements. We are developing a DSG recovery plan which will provide options to bring this back to a balanced budget over the next 3 years. This is a national issue and we are part of national lobbying for the SEND review to move forward to address the funding gaps in this area which are being experienced across the country.

Director of CEC and Central Budgets (+£247 / +5.9%)

- 16 The projected overspend is mainly due to expenditure on the children's improvement plan, unachieved vacancy factor within the senior management team and additional admin support.

Covid 19 Costs and Funding (-£1,192k)

- 17 In summary, an amount of £1,192k has been assumed in these projections as being funded from Covid emergency resources covering the following areas of expenditure:
- £131k for the Community Hubs
 - £67k from the Income Compensation Scheme
 - £544k for the costs being collected centrally that have resulted from the impacts across the directorate
 - £450k for unachievable budget savings

Mitigations (-£1,450k)

- 18 The service is working on a detailed, costed mitigation plan that will include ways to improve controls over expenditure, identify efficiencies across the directorate and benchmarking with other Councils to ensure best value is being achieved across all areas. Work is also underway to manage and understand demand so that early support can be put in place along with improved commissioning to ensure all activity is needs led and evidence based. We are also considering options to deliver services in a different way either through new brokerage arrangements or sharing services on a wider footprint.
- 19 To date, the following mitigations have been identified or are being explored:
- A review of all expensive placements is already in progress via the Track and Challenge exercise. To date, a small number of changes have been identified, which, if actioned, could save £450k, although the majority of this is currently charged to the DSG. The net effect on the General Fund would be a saving of £30k. Further progress may be possible in this area but this will require significant work on step-down arrangements before it would be safe to implement some of the potential moves being considered, such as the possible move from 52 to 38 week placements for a small number of children. If successful, this would result in a significant reduction in General Fund expenditure.
 - A review of all temporary staffing contracts to ensure the most cost effective arrangements are utilised, via the use of fixed term employment contracts rather than agency staff where possible.
 - A review of any local foster carers without current placements with the aim of moving children into these as soon as possible from more expensive arrangements.
 - Continue the restrictions on all discretionary spend and hold recruitment to vacant posts wherever possible and safe to do so.
 - Consider whether any of the savings proposals in development for 2021/22 can be implemented early to deliver additional short term and on-going savings.
 - Review the level of expenditure to be committed from specific unbudgeted in year grants with a view to generating a one-off saving.

Council Plan

- 20 This report is directly linked to the key priority A Better Start for Children and Young People in the Council Plan.

Implications

- 21 The financial implications are covered within the main body of the report. There are no other direct implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

22 As this report is for information only there are no specific recommendations.

Reason: To update the committee on the latest financial position for 2020/21.

Contact Details

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Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Amanda Hatton
Corporate Director of People

**Report
Approved**

Date

25 March 2021

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the authors of the report

Background Papers

2020/21 Finance and Performance Monitor 3 Report, Executive 11 February 2021
<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MId=12508>

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Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee

6 April 2021

Report of the Assistant Director (Customer and Communities)

Community Hubs

Summary

1. This report presents information in support of a proposed scrutiny review of the roll out of the council's community hubs programme.

Background to Scrutiny Topic

2. The council's approach to the development of community hubs, as a vehicle for supporting and engaging with York's communities, was set out in a report to the Decision Session of the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities on 22 November 2019. The proposal drew upon the learning gained from the 4Community Growth York project, which had been designed primarily to promote financial inclusion through the development of community hubs at Sanderson Court Community House, Foxwood Community Centre, Red Tower and, through working with Tang Hall Big Local, at Tang Hall Community Centre.
3. The report proposed a roll-out that is community led and needs based rather than a one size fits all model. Nonetheless, some key principles were proposed for the roll-out:
 - i. **Place** - A successful community hub will be located in an area where there is a need for services in an accessible, safe space which is either already at the heart of community activity or has the potential to develop a positive identity within the local community. The venue will be community managed. The strategy must be community led, responding to the ambitions of the community, rather than focussing on finding solutions for particular buildings.
 - ii. **People** – The strategy must be co-produced in a partnership of resident volunteers and front line service providers building relationships and trust and encouraging active citizenship. The

hubs are about and growing social connections and relationships and connecting resources in new and productive ways: relationships, time, skills, gifts, etc.

- iii. **Purpose** - The established community hubs have been developed in response to particular local needs, for example connecting people to financial inclusion support. A clear initial purpose galvanises activity and motivates people to volunteer and engage. A common theme has been a basic food offer on a free or pay-as-you-feel basis including cooked meals and 'food shops' utilising food donated by supermarkets. The benefits of this being three fold, forming part of the welcome offer, helping household finances go further and creating a social setting where people can relax, feel supported by peers and the wider community.
4. A dual approach to roll-out was proposed with a universal strand designed to support all communities in the development of their community facilities, in addition to a more targeted, developmental approach responding to identified areas of community need.
5. In the universal approach the Council will offer support to all community venues to develop their respective offers as community hubs. Support will be provided to assist community venues, where appropriate, to develop a range of offers to their local communities. Examples may include:
 - i. Maintaining good information and signposting e.g. a presence on and an understanding of how to use *Live Well York*
 - ii. Practical support in managing a safe and welcoming community venue:
 - A focus on health and safety and developing good working practises
 - Training packages to develop volunteers skills and knowledge e.g. food hygiene
 - Support in marketing and promotion e.g. website/social media campaigns
 - Building maintenance and contracts
 - Governance of the volunteer management committee
 - Understanding funding and money management
 - Customer insight

6. A “Good Place Network” will also be developed for York and all community venues will be invited to join. Feedback from practitioners and volunteers involved in the community hubs supports this as a way forward and there is the opportunity here to build on the established and well respected Community Centres Network. It will be led by the sector with support from the Council. It will offer community hub partners tools to set up, develop and maintain their projects as volunteers together with opportunities for peer support and sharing best practice. It is proposed to support the “Good Place Network” in developing a York Community Hubs accreditation scheme.
7. The development offer will be city-wide but will prioritise work in the communities facing the greatest challenges utilising the following checklist:
 - Evidence of need/community challenge can include but is not limited to:
 - Food Poverty
 - Child Poverty
 - Support for families/early help
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Enterprise and Access to work
 - Skills development
 - Equality of access to services
 - Identification of a suitable venue
 - Existence of or potential for the development of a community group or organisation willing to take on the management of a community hub
 - Potential for sustainability

The Pandemic

8. The pandemic has, of course, cut right across the implementation of this programme. In response to the pandemic the council has operated a network of five virtual hubs (Tang Hall, York Travellers Trust Clifton, Foxwood Community Centre, Clements Hall and Haxby Memorial Hall) managed by up to 10 CYC staff per day and supported by a body of dedicated “hub volunteers”. Working with a wide range of community partners and building new, local relationships, these virtual hubs have responded to a diverse range of individual and community needs since March 2020. They are now principally concerned with:

- i. supporting the clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) and others who were referred for support in earlier lockdowns and those required to self-isolate
 - ii. developing proactive community schemes, for example around food to respond to local need
9. The virtual hubs have been recognised as a very successful response to the pandemic, for example by the recent peer review which described them as having “real impact”. However, they are not in line with the original vision for community led hubs and we now need a route map to take us back to that original vision whilst building on the learning and new relationships that we have gained from the experience of operating the virtual hubs.
10. Our intention will be to resume the roll out of physical hubs as soon as possible; however, physical hubs clearly cannot operate before July at the earliest and there is a danger of a hiatus in support for residents. It is clear that there are issues for individuals and communities around mental health and wellbeing caused by isolation, financial and other pressures associated with the pandemic and that these are exacerbated by the disruption to normal community support mechanisms. The virtual hubs will extended up to the end of July to support those self-isolating and this extended period provides us with an opportunity to take a transitional approach to supporting individuals and communities, moving away from crisis support and seeking to build resilient support networks. In this approach:
 - i. Community Hubs will work with ward teams in each ward to link existing community groups with those that have been formed in support of the Covid response. The aim will be to establish a network of trusted community groups to support residents, using ward budgets as appropriate to fill gaps in local provision.
 - ii. Hub managers are currently working to identify those who may benefit from engaging with a local hub longer-term and starting to interact with them by virtual means such as weekly wellbeing calls and socially distanced doorstep chats.
 - iii. The hubs commissioning budget will be used to commission provision from partners, primarily in the voluntary and community sector, to meet identified cross-city needs.
 - iv. As lockdown restrictions ease the hubs will start to build moving to the aim of having at least one community hub for each ward offering a physical meeting place for local people to come

together, and filling in the gaps between existing community venues.

- v. When residents have Council Tax or rent arrears this will be used as a trigger point for contact with hubs as it indicates potential longer term challenges. This will provide the main front door for residents in crisis.
 - vi. Investment in benefits and financial advice capacity and the commissioning of Citizens Advice to provide outreach services in the hubs will further strengthen this approach.
 - vii. Live Well York is surveying partners and citizens with regard to community provision available to address social isolation. We will support to ensure that provision can operate in a Covid-safe way. Community mapping is also being developed to provide residents with a visual representation of support and community offers available to them across each ward.
11. Once community venues and existing hubs are fully open we will be able to return to the original ambition for community-led hubs.

Resourcing

12. Supporting the roll-out of community hubs will be a core function of the Communities Team. In addition to this, the Executive allocated the following one-off resources to support the roll-out. (These resources have been re-profiled to reflect the additional periods of lock-down and the consequent extension of the virtual hubs).

	20/21	21/22	
Staffing to manage the hubs roll-out	£18k	£72k	Continuation of existing roles
Invest in benefits / financial advice capacity		£10k	
Funding for a Volunteer Centre (CVS)	£10k	£30k	
Commissioning of Citizens Advice York	£20k		To provide support to the hubs model
A commissioning fund to support hubs and provide cross-city		£70k	

activity in support of vulnerable people			
TOTAL	£48k	£182k	£230k

13. There is also potential for ward members to use ward budgets in support of community hubs including the ward Covid-19 recovery fund (see report to the 2 February Decision Session of the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities attached as Annex A).

Other types of hub

14. Over and above the general community hub approach outlined here, more tailored approaches are also being pursued to meet the specific needs of particular communities. An example of this is the York Migrant Hub where we have recruited volunteers from migrant communities who are working together to open a new outreach service. The hub will become a Saturday community hub for migrants with sessions run in partnership with York Explore and a cohort of York St John University Law Students and volunteer community interpreters. Another example is the Community Covenant project which has established hubs for the armed forces community and has recently attracted funding to set up breakfast clubs.

Proposed Scope of Review

15. Since the roll-out of community hubs is not based on a one-size-fits-all approach but rather aims to respond to local need, important questions arise about how ward members will engage with their communities to understand need and respond accordingly. Potential review objectives would be to:
- i. Gain an understanding of national best practice and methodology in supporting community hubs and make recommendations for how this might be applied in York
 - ii. Establish the various:
 - different types and models of community hub that exist nationally
 - the various governance models that are available for hubs

and make recommendations with regard to their potential application in York

- iii. Make recommendations for how ward members can best engage with / support their communities in:
 - assessing and evidencing local need
 - establishing community hubs
- iv. Develop model steps for developing community hubs which might include:
 - Understanding local need and demands
 - Establishing a mission and vision with the community
 - Stakeholder mapping, developing partnerships and building relationships
 - Developing objectives
 - Developing a sustainable business plan
 - Securing assets
 - Establishing governance arrangements
- v. Develop proposals for how ward members could use ward budgets most effectively in support of hubs and complementing use of the hubs commissioning budget

Review Activities

16. Review activities could include:
 - i. Reviewing national guidance and best practice literature such as that produced by *Locality*, the national membership network supporting local community organisations
 - ii. Visiting existing York hubs and hearing from community leaders about the opportunities and challenges
 - iii. Visiting hubs of various kinds elsewhere in the country such as those established through the DCLG funded *Our Place* programme: the Ameina Centre in Luton, Soho / Victoria Friends & Neighbours in Smethwick, Levenshulme Inspire in Manchester
 - iv. Visiting other local authorities that have rolled out significant community hub programmes such as the London Borough of Brent
 - v. Looking at hubs models of different types such as:

- hubs in libraries as promoted by Arts Council England, see: [Libraries-CommunityHubs-Renaisi.pdf \(artscouncil.org.uk\)](#), or
- “Family Hubs”, see: [Home - The Family Hubs Network](#)

Timetable for review

17. Desktop activity can begin quite quickly once the immediate pressures on staff of dealing with organising the pandemic response begin to recede. However, it is very clear that the activities suggested above can only be conducted in a meaningful way once social distancing is ended and facilities are reopened. This would suggest scheduling the greater part of the review activity for the early Autumn.

Recommendations

18. Members are recommended to:
- Proceed with a review having considered and refined the remit as proposed in paragraph 15
 - Set up a Task Group to carry out the review on the Committee’s behalf
 - Agree a timeframe for completion of the review

Reason: To support the council’s development of its community hubs programme

Annex A: Ward Funding – report to the decision session of the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities, 2 February 2021

Contact Details

Author:

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Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Pauline Stuchfield
Director of Customer and Communities

**Report
Approved**



Date 25 March 2021

Wards Affected:

All





**Decision Session – Executive Member for
Culture, Leisure and Communities**

2 February, 2021

Report of the Assistant Director (Communities & Culture)

Ward Funding

Summary

1. This report sets out a review of the use of ward funding during 2020/21 and identifies issues and opportunities for 2021/22.

Recommendation

2. The Executive Member is asked to consider the analysis of ward funding set out and:
 - Note the success of ward budgets in responding to Covid-19
 - Note the diverse range of effective ways in which ward funding is being used to support local communities
 - Recommend to ward members the potential priority areas set out in paragraphs 17 and following in order to focus support for residents deemed vulnerable, isolated, or in need of other essential help and to combat the worst effects of Covid-19
 - Consider the effectiveness of ward funding to meet community needs, hearing the voice of the community and charitable groups that have utilised ward funding

Reason: So that ward funding will be used effectively to:

- Engage residents in making better local use of resources
- Enable ward members to deliver on local priorities

Background

3. Council on 29 October requested the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities to:
 - a) instigate a review of the use of devolved ward budgets, in the context of unprecedented financial pressures, so as to

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maximise their efficiency, value for money, and impact for residents across the whole city; and

- b) as part of this review and within the next month, prioritise the flexible use of ward budgets with each councillor allocating £2,000 within their ward budgets over the next 6 months, to utilise a focused resource of almost £100,000. This resource will focus on supporting residents deemed vulnerable, isolated, or in need of other essential help through the funding of community, voluntary and other organisations working to combat the worst effects of Covid-19.

4. Ward revenue budgets are currently made up of:

- A core budget of £150k
- A “Pride in York” budget of £200k
- A “Safer Communities Fund” of £250k

(The Safer Communities Fund was introduced as part of the council’s Supplementary Budget Proposals agreed in July 2019 with criteria set out in the “Refreshing Ward Committees” paper agreed by Executive in August 2019 Executive. This fund was originally introduced as a one-off allocation to cover the 4 years of the administration; however, an additional £250k allocation was made in 20/21.)

5. The Ward Highways Capital Scheme is a four-year programme which allows wards to aggregate their allocations in order to undertake more substantial schemes. It consists of:

- £250k p.a. set aside from the Highways capital programme
- A one-off £500k to be used for highways improvements in respect of Roads and Footways
- A one-off £500k to be used for walking and cycling improvements

6. Revenue and capital budgets are devolved to wards in proportion to the number of members that each ward has.

7. In addition, the Housing Environment Improvement Programme (HEIP) is a four-year programme which funds physical improvements to council housing land and property. The £170k p.a. is allocated to wards in proportion to the number of council housing properties in the ward.

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Spending Ward Budgets**Revenue budgets:**

8. In 19/20, a total of £443k was allocated to schemes by wards from their revenue budgets (of which £392k was spent in year) with the balance of this included in the total carried forward into 20/21. Given that there were many new ward members in that first year of the new administration who needed to establish their ward priorities prior to developing spending plans, this represents a healthy level of expenditure.
9. Funds are allocated to wards on the basis of a single integrated pot. Nonetheless, by looking at the nature of the expenditure, it is possible to make some analysis of the nature of expenditure. In 2019/20:
 - £258k was spent on “core” budget activity
 - £82k has been spent on “Pride in York” related activity
 - £102k was spent on “Safer Communities” related activity
10. Looking at the current year’s spend we can see that to date:
 - £336k has already been spent/committed on “core” budget activity
 - £45k has been spent/committed on “Pride in York” related activity
 - £99k has been spent/committed on “Safer Communities” related activity
11. Analysis of spend in 2019/20 shows that the spend can also be broken down by category:

• Grants to community organisations	77%
• Works commissioned from CYC depts.	19%
• Externally purchased services	4%
12. This analysis demonstrates that wards are:
 - by and large on track to manage their spend to target, utilising the previous year’s underspend over time in a managed way
 - using their budgets in an integrated way in pursuit of their identified priorities
 - supporting the local community and voluntary sector by investing in its capacity as a source of expertise and as service provider

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13. Ward grants are used to support local community groups and initiatives to deliver projects and improvements within their local area. This allows members to build resilience within their communities and add value in ways that are of most benefit locally. One very timely example of this is the provision of salt bins around the city, where wards have funded the installation and filling of 48 new salt bins over the past 4 years.
14. Ward grants have been used extensively to meet the identified city priority of reducing loneliness and social isolation as well as expanding opportunities for young people and improving health and wellbeing. Some example schemes meeting these priorities are set out in Appendix 2.
15. Ward grants have been well utilised throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, with over 40 grants totalling more than £55,000 distributed to community groups so far. The support they have offered has been wide ranging, from food deliveries to online learning and initiatives to reduce the social isolation caused by lockdown. Appendix 3 shows a table of Covid-19 grants given out by wards.
16. It is proposed to continue to develop use of the Social Value Engine (an online calculator-style tool created by Rose Regeneration and East Riding of Yorkshire Council which aims to provide a universal measure of outcome) to evaluate the impact of ward schemes. The tool can also help ward members in predicting where a project or service has most social value and in prioritising where an intervention can have the most positive impact. It is helpful in evidencing the value of seed- and match-funding, which is particularly helpful in the context of ward funding.

Future Priority Areas

17. Included in the council's budget proposals for 21/22 is a ward Covid-19 recovery fund. If approved by Budget Council, this fund will enable wards to deliver a community-based approach to post-Covid-19 recovery supporting their communities to build resilient support networks in order to deal with current issues and to prevent crises recurring.
18. Wards will be able to respond to particular local need, for example in the areas of: food poverty, child poverty, support for families / early help, health and wellbeing, enterprise and access to work, skills development, equality of access to services.

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19. Wards may work through existing community groups with the aim of establishing a network of trusted community groups that will provide support to residents, both in the recovery phase and during any future crisis periods.
20. Wards should also consider using part of their funding to work through their local hubs. The council's virtual hubs are currently being maintained to continue to provide support to those who need it, a mix of those who have previously been shielding, those currently self-isolating, those experiencing financial difficulties due to furlough/redundancy, and families who may previously have accessed drop-in sessions during school holidays. As times goes on we are increasingly working with individuals and communities to look at longer-term solutions, both for those directly affected by the virus and for those affected by its wider impacts. Taking a person-centred approach this model supports individuals through a crisis and helps build resilience to prevent future crises. Ward funding could be used to develop services through hubs that meet local need, complementing the work of the council by commission community and third sector organisations working through those hubs.

Ward Highways Capital Scheme

21. With the capital program approaching the half way point, we have over 320 scheme suggestions. Common themes identified include: preventing anti-social parking and protecting grass verges, improving cycling infrastructure and undertaking road repair to residential roads that are unlikely to be repaired under the main capital programme.
22. In December the highways and communities teams undertook another round of 'walkabouts' with Ward Members with very positive feedback form those wards that took up the opportunity. It is generally appreciated that walkabouts, assisted by highways engineers, are the best way for Members to mobilise their ward capital allocations effectively to resolve local highways concerns and progress ideas and suggestions from local communities.

HEIP

23. The Housing Environment Improvement Programme is an opportunity for Members to deliver positive changes for housing tenants in their wards. HEIP Is currently delivering 45 schemes across the city, mainly around themes of open space improvement, improvements to parking and community safety schemes. Though

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delivery has been impacted by the pandemic, teams are confident they can increase the pace of the delivery once restrictions ease. The Communities Team continue to work closely with colleagues in housing to ensure the success of the program.

Ward Funding Process

24. Covid-19 restrictions and continued lockdowns impacted on the traditional Ward Committee format with no face to face meetings held for much of the year. However, wards have adapted to the challenge, moving their engagement work to online platforms such as Zoom. Examples of meetings held this way include Holgate Ward holding a successful community discussion on cycling provision and Rawcliffe and Clifton Without Ward holding a well-attended consultation meeting on the proposed changes to Hurricane Way traffic lights.
25. Ward spends are closely monitored and reported on, with all ward spending published as an online 'Officer Decision Log' and a regularly updated spreadsheet uploaded to the open data platform. All grant recipients are required to complete a monitoring form that not only evidences how they spent the grant, but asks them to provide details on the impact of the grant along with feedback and learning we can pass on to support similar initiatives in the future.
26. Those ward projects which represent innovation or excellent working practices will be shared amongst wards in the form of a monthly ward update, which will also include reminders of ward meeting schedules and ward budget updates. The sharing of ward ideas and practice has traditionally been done organically within the normal working day, but with the move to more permanent remote working, steps will need to be taken to make sure that this process still occurs in a scheduled manner.

Options and Analysis

27. It is open to the Executive Member to accept the analysis and the future priorities suggested or to suggest alternative priorities.
28. The benefits of continuing to develop neighbourhood working are evident locally and have been demonstrated through national research. For example, a 2018 report by the National Association of Neighbourhood Management showed how successful those authorities have been that declined to cut neighbourhood budgets in response in response to austerity but instead invested strategically in locality working, with a wide geographical coverage of the local

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authority area and a high level of ambition in terms of the range of issues it seeks to address. These authorities are seeing strategic locality working delivering a transformative effect for local communities, addressing some of the most challenging issues nationally, such as mental health and wellbeing, adult social care, and skills and employability. Those authorities that have operated locality working in this way were reported to expect to continue to invest in it over the next few years.

Implications

29. **Finance:** The allocation of ward budgets is shown at Appendix 1.
30. **Equalities:** The equality impact assessment points to the need for a wide variety of methods being required to enable the engagement of all residents in ward priorities and action planning. It also suggests the need for multiple channels of communication.
31. There are no additional Legal, HR, IT, Crime and Disorder or other implications arising directly from this report.

Council Plan

32. Ward Funding can support many of the aims of the Council Plan and especially:
 - A Greener and Cleaner City
 - Good Health and Wellbeing
 - A Better Start for Children and Young People
 - An inclusive economy
 - Safe Communities and culture for all

Risk Management

33. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the main risks that have been identified in this report are those which could lead to the inability to meet business objectives and failure to meet stakeholders' expectations, which could in turn damage the Council's image and reputation. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score has been assessed at "Low". This means that the risk level is acceptable but that regular monitoring of progress against delivery of ward schemes will be required.

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Appendices:

1. Allocation of ward budgets
2. Example schemes
3. Covid-19 related grants

Contact Details

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Liam Dennis Ward Schemes Project Manager	Report Approved		Date	
Wards Affected:			All	✓
For further information please contact the author of the report				

Background Papers:

document/reports/Executive member decision meeting/Ward Funding.doc