
Meeting	Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
Date	12 March 2025
Present	Councillors J Burton (Chair), Vassie (Vice-Chair), Baxter, Hook, Moroney, Rose, Runciman, Wann, Wilson and Waller (Substitute)
Apologies	Councillor Smalley
In Attendance	Councillor Pavlovic (Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities)
Officers Present	Pauline Stuchfield – Director of Housing and Communities Sara Storey – Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Integration Michael Jones – Assistant Director, Housing Steve Tait – Finance Manager Graham Frodsham – Principal Accountant

46. Apologies for Absence (5:35 pm)

Apologies were received from Cllr Smalley, who was substituted by Cllr Waller. Apologies were also received from the Head of Service Finance and the Director of Public Health.

47. Declarations of Interest (5:35 pm)

Members were asked to declare at this point in the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registerable interests they might have in respect of the business on the agenda, if they had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests.

None were declared, although with reference to agenda item 5 (2024/25 Finance and Performance Monitor 3), Cllr J Burton noted in the interests of transparency that she had used the Be Independent service.

48. Minutes (5:35 pm)

In respect of the minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2024, an amendment was suggested under item 30 (Urgent Care Delivery) to correct the spelling of 'clinic system' to 'Klinik system'.

In respect of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2025, in relation to item 45 (Work Plan) concerns were again raised over the position in relation to pharmacy provision in Westfield Ward and it was suggested that the Chair write to the Integrated Care Board on this issue.

Resolved:

- i. That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2024 be amended at item 30 (Urgent Care Delivery) to replace:
 - 'The suggestion of linking the clinic system to the out of hours was being considered.'With:
 - 'The suggestion of linking the Klinik system to the out of hours was being considered.'
- ii. That subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meetings held on 6 November 2024, 4 December 2025 and 15 January 2025 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- iii. That the Chair write to the Integrated Care Board to highlight the committee's concerns over future out of hours pharmacy provision in Westfield Ward.

49. Public Participation (5:39 pm)

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

50. 2024/25 Finance and Performance Monitor 3 (6:26 pm)

Members considered a report setting out the projected 2024/25 financial position and the performance position for the period covering 1 April 2024 to 31 December 2024.

Officers provided an overview and drew members' attention to paragraph 50 of the report where it was stated that the Housing Services directorate was forecasting an overspend of £711k; this was an error and in fact the directorate was forecasting a £790k underspend.

In response to questions from the committee it was noted that:

- With reference to the increase of around £300k forecast overspend for Adult Social Care and Integration over the last quarter, it was noted that the high cost of certain placements could affect this figure, that savings delivered since the previous quarter had been lower than expected.
- Staffing overspends in the Hospital Discharge, Mental Advocacy, and Mental Health Social Work teams were due to there being no budget for necessary existing posts and the use of agency staff. A shift to multidisciplinary working in the Hospital Discharge team should help reduce costs, while efforts were underway across the service to bring down agency use and do as much work as possible with Council staff to ensure consistency for service users.
- In relation to Housing indicators, the increased numbers of housing consents and affordable homes delivered were welcomed. It was noted that it was difficult to track the number of short-term lets as the available data was changeable given that some properties were only let on this basis for part of the year, but that officers would explore what was possible. The data on houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) was also welcomed and it was agreed that officers would signpost any comparable datasets for other cities with a high student population.
- Winter rough sleeper numbers could vary due to weather conditions and economic factors. It was noted that the new strategy had been introduced in December 2024, and that quarterly data showed a positive direction of travel since the transfer of some services in-house.
- Every opportunity was being taken to ask Council tenants who required repairs to contact the Council before embarking on potentially costly disrepair claims, and work was being to ensure tenants were aware of the risk of substantial legal bills if unsuccessful. Several disrepair claims were received monthly requiring a response regardless of their merit, which took up legal resource; this was a growing trend nationally, but York was in favourable condition compared to many authorities. Local authority tenants were encouraged to report any required repairs to the Council.
- With reference to the Public Health indicators, it was agreed to seek further clarification from the Director of Public Health on action to address the widening of the gap in breastfeeding rates at 6-8 weeks between the highest and lowest wards, the fall this quarter in the proportion of infants receiving a 6-8 week review by the time they were 8 weeks old, and on the relevance of health metrics from 2020-

21. The increased percentage of smokers successfully quitting was welcomed.

- The increased level of detail in the report was welcomed by members.

Resolved:

- i. To note the finance and performance information.
- ii. To note that work will continue on identifying savings needed to fully mitigate the forecast overspend.

Reason: To ensure expenditure is kept within the approved budget.

51. Asset Management Investment Plan (5:39 pm)

The committee considered a report providing an overview of the outcome of the council house Stock Condition Survey and how the information is being utilised to influence investment plans in the coming five years, as well as analysis of performance of the Asset Management function against agreed targets.

Officers provided an overview, and in response to members' questions it was noted that:

- Previous gaps in stock condition data had meant the service had tended to be reactive, while it was acknowledged that in recent years communication with tenants could have been stronger. Using the new more comprehensive stock condition data it was intended that by Christmas each year, work for the financial year ahead would be planned and communication with tenants would take place in advance.
- Investment in component renewal over each five-year cycle needed to be smoothed out, which would involve bringing some investment forward and 'sweating' certain assets such as roofing or combi boilers where necessary.
- The kitchen and bathroom programme for the next year would focus on properties in Dringhouses where replacements had previously been promised, and those properties where previous tenants had opted not to take up the opportunity of replacement when offered.
- It was expected that retrofit work at Alex Lyon House and Honeysuckle House would be delivered within the grant funding agreement received. The contract for this work would be signed soon and there would be opportunities for residents and ward councillors to engage with the contractor, while work was underway to ensure residents' needs and expectations were fully understood.

- With reference to additional work identified during the stock condition survey, surveyors were not encouraged to make any promises to tenants, but catch-up repairs and HHSRS (Housing health and safety rating system) hazards were referred directly to Building Services. Although some issues were more complex the vast majority had now been resolved.
- There was significant interest whenever apprenticeships in the service were advertised, and a new apprentice plan to cover the need for fully trained staff over the coming years was being developed. Recruitment and retention remained a challenge, and officers would explore options around requiring those trained by the council to commit for a period after qualification.
- It was also noted that taking on an apprenticeship could be a financial challenge, including for care leavers and armed forces veterans. Support was available for veterans applying for jobs at the Council through the Armed Forces Covenant, and officers would consider options to work with course providers.
- In relation to the performance measures at paragraph 24 in the report, it was noted that the proportion of properties with valid Electrical Inspection Certificate was lower than other measures largely due to a change in the law which required inspections every five years; previously this had been every ten years; there was a need to catch up, although risks were prioritised. With reference to the 28-day target to re-let a property, this was achievable and a number of measures were being used to make the process faster and more efficient.
- A range of options were being explored to improve the proportion of repairs completed on a first visit, including multi-trade staff and better equipped vans. The Executive Member noted that while work was ongoing, positive progress had been made, and that ways of bringing more comprehensive performance data to scrutiny in future were being considered. He also emphasised the importance of customer service and encouraged Members and council tenants to report any issues which had not been resolved to the service.
- With reference to the cost benefit of sustainability measures, it was noted that more funding would be needed over the coming years, while at present the picture was mixed – solar panels came with only a small maintenance cost while heat pumps were currently much more expensive than combi boilers, although this could change in future.
- The importance of sustainable procurement was emphasised, and it was noted that the Council had previously been involved with the sustainable procurement network ICLEI. It was confirmed that this remained an important consideration in the context of the impact of inflation on the cost of building materials, and that officers would

consider how information in this area could best be captured for future reports.

Resolved:

- i. To note:
 - a) The outcome of the stock condition survey;
 - b) Existing performance against targets; and
 - c) The proposed investment plan.

Reason: To keep the committee updated.

52. Work Plan (6:50 pm)

Members considered the committee's work plan for the remainder of the 2024/25 municipal year. Several points were raised including:

- The resident survey which would inform the 2025 Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) had closed on 2 March. Consideration of the 2025 PNA was an unallocated item on the committee's work plan, and it was suggested that confirmation be sought as to when would be most appropriate for this item to be brought to the committee to best enable them to input into the PNA process.
- It was noted that it had been decided at the committee's November 2024 meeting to request a further update on Urgent Care after six months and suggested that this be considered for an upcoming meeting.
- Members would be contacted with some new suggested dates for the rescheduled telecare demonstration. The suggestion was also made of finding suitable contacts from the city's universities who could advise on emerging technologies in this area.
- Attention was drawn to the review of the Council's scrutiny function, the recommendations of which would be considered at the next full Council meeting. If adopted these would entail a change to the structure of the Council's scrutiny committees, and it was suggested that some work plan items might be best left over until the new scrutiny cycle.
- The proposed Task and Finish group on Home Care Commissioning had not progressed so far but would be revisited.
- The Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust would potentially be able to bring a requested report following on from a Council motion on 'Trauma Informed City' to the committee's May meeting. It was suggested that taking a broader approach to trauma might be considered as part of the new scrutiny cycle.

Resolved:

- i. To note the work plan.
- ii. To enquire as to when would be the most appropriate point for the draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment to be considered by scrutiny members to best enable them to input into the PNA process.
- iii. To request a further update on Urgent Care Delivery at one of the committee's next scheduled meetings.

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

Cllr J Burton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.35 pm and finished at 7.02 pm].