
Meeting	Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee
Date	24 September 2019
Present	Councillors Webb (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Daubeney, Fenton, Fitzpatrick, Heaton, Hollyer and Baker (substitute for Cllr D Taylor)
Apologies	Councillor D Taylor

19. 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 personal non prejudicial interest in that he was a teacher at Archbishop Holgate's Secondary School.

20. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair.

It was noted that Cllr Fitzpatrick and Cllr Hollyer had both been appointed onto the Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Committee investigating food poverty.

21. Public Participation

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

22. Attendance of Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education

The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education was in attendance to provide an update on his priorities and challenges for the 2019/20 municipal year.

The Executive Member highlighted key points around his portfolio area and introduced his main priorities within Education, Skills, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Children's Social Care.

In answer to Members questions the Executive Member and the Assistant Director of Education and Skills and Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities stated that:

- Enterprise Advisers had been recruited in a number of York schools to provide strategic support to the head teacher and Senior Leadership Teams. They helped develop an effective strategy within schools that provided young people with business skills.
- The new Skills Plan did not address directly the skills gap regarding climate change mitigation but that the City Region and Local Authorities were aware that new methods, particularly within construction and engineering, were required.
- Officers were encouraging head teachers to take the initiative and develop further the mental health champion scheme within their schools.
- Head teachers across the city continued to meet to address the attainment gaps.
- Speech and language therapists were using tool kits to accurately identify at the earliest possible stage speech, language and communication difficulties in young children. This would allow expert interventions to be put in place to help a child develop before they hit statutory school age.
- A number of peer reviews were continuing to take place across the directorate.
- A move to recruit additional foster carers was in commissioning.
- The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was used by a team of safeguarding specialist to support cases and deliver an accurate and competent assessment, within the 24hr time scale and would encourage a consistent approach to minimise drift and delay in both Child in Need and Child Protection plans.
- Officers were supporting schools to meet the challenges of the new Ofsted education inspection framework.

Members noted that the Executive Member had visited a number of York schools, York College and attended various forums where head teachers from faith, maintained and

academy schools were committed to working together to improve the system as a whole.

Members agreed it was important for the Committee to receive the outcomes of the peer reviews and the Chair thanked the Executive Member and officers for their update.

Resolved:

- i) That the update be noted.
- ii) That an update be received in 6 months' time

Reason: To keep the Committee updated.

23. Local Area Teams - Update

The Committee considered a report that updated them on the outcomes of a multi-agency audit into early help arrangements.

The Head of Early Help and Local Area Teams was in attendance to present the report and he updated Members on:

- The findings from the multi-agency audit into early help arrangements.
- How the audit was informing the review of early help arrangements and the development of a new early help strategy.
- The next steps in reviewing and revising the early help offer in York.

Members were informed that the YorOK Board and Early Help Partnership had instigated a multi-agency audit of early help arrangements in spring 2019 and that early help was not just a local authority responsibility, it was a collaboration with a complex range of partners operating at different levels of need right across the city. Members noted that the Working together 2018 framework set the expectations for all partners in relation to early help and effective early help relied upon local organisations and agencies working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help.
- Undertake an assessment of the next door early help.

- Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focused on activity to improve the outcomes for the child.

Officers drew Members attention to some key points in the audit, particularly around identifying and assessing need. It was confirmed that the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) would help improve information sharing across multi-agency partners and develop early help interventions.

Members noted that the audit had provided a helpful insight into the perceptions of different agencies operating locally and that the feedback had already been shared with the early help task and finish group, the early help partnership, the Youth Offending Team (YOT) Board and the YorOK Board.

Officers confirmed there was a range of work being undertaken and that any changes would support the wider improvement journey for safeguarding children. The next steps were noted and following discussions around multi-agency working and mental health interventions, officers answered Members questions and confirmed that:

- Multi-agency working had significantly improved through the use of MASH.
- A lead professional would have an overview of the progress of a case, ensuring the views of families, children and young people were considered along with multi-agency support joining together at the point of need, to reduce the impact on families.
- There had been significant improvements within families, children and young people accessing the crisis team service, which had seen a reduction in hospital admissions.

Members thanked officers for their update and were impressed with the work going on in this area.

Resolved:

- i) That the report be noted.
- ii) That further reports be received in relation to:
 - The impact review results and the methodology to monitor the outcomes and changes.

- Mental health interventions.

Reason: To comply with scrutiny procedures.

24. City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP) Update

Members considered a report that provided an update on the activities of City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP).

The Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities gave an update and she informed Members that the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) held its last meeting on 23 January 2019 and following the new national statutory arrangements, it became an 'Early Adopter' of the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership on 1 April 2019.

She highlighted the work the new partnership was delivering and reminded Members that the full CYSCP Annual report was available at <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/about-the-cyscb.htm>

In answer to Members questions the Corporate Director and Assistant Director of Children's Specialist Services confirmed:

- The distinction between safeguarding and child protection.
- That this Committee and the Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee would be hosting a joint roundtable discussion on County Lines on 28 October 2019.
- That a multi-agency audit, led by the NSPCC, would take place between October and December 2019.

The Chair thanked officers for their update.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report and the new safeguarding partnership arrangements be noted.
- (ii) That the outcomes of the multi-agency audit be reported at a future Committee meeting.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee was aware of the transition to, the new arrangements and of the ongoing business of the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

25. Overview of Children's Services

Members considered a report that gave an overview of Children's Services.

The Assistant Director of Children's Services summarised the report and confirmed that following the peer review that took place in May 2019 and the Ofsted focus visit in July 2019, officers had developed an improvement plan that would improve outcomes for children and future Ofsted inspection judgements. She brought to Members attention a child's journey through Children's Social Care and explained how the required improvements in children's services would be achieved and what conditions must be put in place to ensure longstanding sustained change.

Members noted that the unannounced focus visit was part of the usual Ofsted framework and was not triggered by the peer review. Senior Managers were pleased that Ofsted had recognised that they had already taken steps to ensure they had an accurate understanding of the quality of social work practice and the action needed to begin to improve services for children and families in York.

The Assistant Director highlighted the findings and progress to date and in answer to Members questions she confirmed that:

- There was a strength and focus on the quality of practice within social work.
- Case chronologies were now being completed and updated during the assessment process and training for social workers had been initiated on their purpose and value.
- The Front Door process had been restructured and they had been some restructuring within the safeguarding intervention teams.
- External scrutiny was taking place through various peer reviews and all case files would be audited to a set template where managers would ensure any actions from the audits were undertaken.
- Caseloads were tracked and there was now no cases that would come to the attention of children's social care that received a response 'no further action'.
- A new supervision model had been introduced, which included staff engagement events taking place every quarter and staff wellbeing meetings every fortnight.

- Consultation with the University of York had resulted in the recruitment of 8 new social workers starting in October 2019 and the establishment of a Social Work Academy.
- A new Leadership Academy was starting in November 2019 to train and support staff to progress.
- Ideally no agency social workers should be covering a permanent post by the end of 2019.

Member's thanked all staff for the work they were undertaking and implementing to improve the service and would welcome feedback on the results of any peer reviews.

Resolved:

- i) That the report be accepted, noted and commented on.
- ii) That the outcomes of the peer reviews be reported when appropriate.

Reason: To ensure the Committee are kept up to date with progress in Children's Specialist Services.

26. Cultural Entitlement for Young People

Members considered a report that provided an update on work to develop a cultural entitlement for young people.

The Assistant Director of Communities and Culture was in attendance to give an update and confirmed that REACH, the Local Cultural Education Partnership, would lead the development of a joined-up local arts and heritage education offer for all children and young people.

In answer to Members questions it was confirmed that:

- Schools engagement was positive since the Ofsted framework had broadened and required children and young people to develop their cultural capacity through the curriculum.
- Schools were considering sophisticated ways to really engage and encourage young people's creative ambitions and artefacts would be welcomed in schools to benefit children inside the classroom.

- A creative careers week was being developed to encourage students to meet with employers.

Members thanked officers for their update and agreed that there was a need to ensure the most disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and disability (SEND) benefited from this offer.

Resolved:

- i) That the report be noted and commented on.
- ii) That the Chair of REACH be invited to present an update to the Committee at a future meeting.

Reason: To ensure Members were informed and consulted on the development of cultural entitlement for young people.

27. Work Plan

The Committee considered its draft work plan for the municipal year 2019/20.

It was noted that Members had been invited to attend the Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 28 October 2019 to jointly consider County Lines and the Scrutiny Officer would be emailing Committee Members further updates regarding this meeting.

Following discussion, Members agreed to update the work plan with the following:

29 October 2019

- Overview of tenant involvement.
- Overview of special educational needs and disability (SEND).

27 November 2019

- Invite the Chair of REACH to provide an update on the development of the cultural entitlement for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Inclusion review update, including Danesgate.
- Narrowing the Gap project work update.

18 December 2019

- An overview of quality assurance.

26 February 2020

- That an update on harmful sexual behaviour be included in the Bi-annual report on safeguarding and looked after children.

It was agreed that peer reviews would be reported when appropriate.

Resolved: That the work plan be approved subject to the above amendments/additions.

Reason: To keep the Committees work plan updated.

Cllr R Webb, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30pm and finished at 7.30pm].