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Meeting	Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee
Date	19 September 2017
Present	Councillors Taylor (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), S Barnes, Brooks, Dew, Crawshaw and Dickinson
Apologies	Councillor Jackson and Mr Hagon

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## 9. **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 Crawshaw disclosed a personal non-prejudicial interest in various agenda items due to his partner working with Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust.

Cllr S Barnes disclosed a personal non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 5 (30 Hours Childcare – Early Implementation Update) due him having a two-year-old daughter.

## 10. **MINUTES**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 05 July 2017 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair.

## 11. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme on general matters within the remit of the Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee.

## 12. 2017/18 FINANCE & PERFORMANCE FIRST QUARTER REPORT - CHILDREN, EDUCATION & COMMUNITIES

Members considered a first quarter finance and performance report for 2017/18 for all of service areas within the remit of the committee. The Corporate Director of Children, Education & Communities and the Finance Manager for Adults, Children & Education were in attendance to provide an overview of the report and to answer Members' questions. They highlighted the overall overspend of over £300k which translated into 1.4% of the 2017/18 Projected Outturn Variation. It was also clarified that the fifth column of the table in Paragraph 2 of the report should be labelled as "Net Spend £000" instead of "Gross Spend £000".

Following Members' questions, the following was explained:

- The net projected underspend of £101k in Paragraph 10 of the report referred specifically to the vacancies within the Skills Team and not within the Schools Improvement Service. Staffing requirements within these areas would continue to be evaluated.
- The net projected underspend of £453k in Paragraph 7 of the report came from a specific grant (Dedicated Schools Grant) which meant that this money could not be used to reduce overspend in other areas.
- Although a considerable rise in the % of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time was reported, recent Ofsted inspection clarified that all the thresholds and criteria had been applied correctly and no children were 'in the wrong part of the system'.
- Although a negative trend in the % of Reception and Y6 children recorded as obese was noted, this was not significant across the City and additional school nurses were being recruited in order to improve this area.
- Attainment and progress outcomes in writing in KS1 and KS2 had increased, possibly due to implementation of the new programme. It was unclear whether the modification of the way the progress had been assessed had biased those results.
- The City of York Council (CYC) was obliged to write off school deficits for schools that had been required to convert to sponsored academy status.

Finally, Members queried why there was a steady decline in the % of working age population qualified to at least Level 2.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the Committee on the latest financial and performance position for 2017/18.

Action Required

To provide more information on why there was a steady decline in the % of working age population qualified to at least Level 2. JS

**13. 30 HOURS CHILDCARE - EARLY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE**

The Head of Childcare Strategy Service (CSS) attended the meeting to provide an update on the early implementation of the new statutory entitlement for 30 Hours Childcare for Working Families. The Chair commended the CSS team for their work, and in response to Members' questions, the following was clarified:

- The team continued to challenge the Department for Education to ensure that the implementation of the provision for 3 and 4-year-olds was not at the expense of younger and disadvantaged children. In-depth surveys with the providers were being conducted on this topic. The number of 2-year-olds benefitting from the extended hours had increased in 2017.
- The CSS welcomed further scrutiny into closing the attainment gaps and improving outcomes for young children and further information on this matter would be provided in future meetings.
- The views on benefits of longer hours for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) varied and significant discussions with the providers had been held on that matter. There were providers who excelled in this area; more information would be provided to the Committee in due course.
- The single rate of £4 an hour for all provider types plus a 40p an hour deprivation supplement would remain the same for the following two years.

- It was too early to judge whether the out-of-school clubs could be more accessible for non-eligible children.
- The small number of out-of-school clubs participating in the project ensured that the trial was efficient and manageable; there was potential to recruit more clubs in the future.
- The issue with smaller providers not having capacity for charging for other services due to introduction of the 30 Hours Childcare was acknowledged. Nonetheless, all the providers agreed to work with the team on those conditions.
- Feedback on the confusing naming of the project (30 Hours **Free** Childcare) had been given to Government.

Members queried how the statistics on the % of SEND and Pupil Premium (PP) children using extended hours compared with the overall SEND and PP profile.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the Committee on the implementation of a new statutory entitlement for 30 Hours Childcare for Working Families.

Action Required

To provide information on how the statistics on the % of SEND and Pupil Premium (PP) children using extended hours compared with the overall SEND and PP profile. BM

**14. BI-ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING UPDATE**

Members considered a report that updated the Committee on key local and national safeguarding developments since January 2017. The Assistant Director for Children’s Specialist Services drew Members’ attention to the 2016 Ofsted inspection of services’ results, focusing on its positive aspects such as the leadership approach, voice of children and adoption procedures as well as on room for improvement in the areas of contingency planning and emotional & mental health focus. It was clarified that the services participated in numerous evaluation initiatives which included a regional self-evaluation process comprising 15 Local Authorities in Yorkshire, Children Safeguarding Board

inspections, independent reviewing arrangements and further SEND inspections scheduled within a year, which gave reassurance in relation to the high-quality of services following the recent team restructuring. The results of these evaluations would be fed back to the Committee. Finally, it was emphasised that the team was pro-actively reaching out to young people in order to inform them about their rights and entitlements.

Members expressed their concerns about the results of the U Matter 2017 survey indicating that 33% of children felt that the overall preparation they had for leaving care had been not good/poor; it was acknowledged that this was often due to the reactive nature of children's decision to leave care. It was also explained that a new system had been introduced where children who were re-classified no longer needed to change their social worker, although it was sometimes still difficult for them to build relationships with just one social worker due to issues such as part-time work and job-share arrangements.

Following a Member's question on the representativeness of the sample within the U Matter Survey, it was clarified that it was broadly in line with the overall profile although children from non-residential areas were often less willing to respond to surveys.

Resolved: (i) That the contents of the report be noted.

(ii) That bi-annual safeguarding and children's social care service updates continue to be received by the Committee.

Reason: To allow Members to be fully informed on key children's safeguarding issues in York and to support Member challenge in this area.

## **15. YORK LEARNING - UPDATE AND PROGRESS REPORT 2016/17**

The Head of York Learning provided an overview of the end of academic year performance and data for York Learning. He explained that the progress on the Strategic Service Plan with

actions for the 2016/17 academic year had been provided as per Members' request. He also clarified the following:

- The last bullet point in Paragraph 5 should read: "Comment on the issues identified for the new academic year in paragraph **12**";
- The word "passported" in Paragraph 6 should be replaced with "subcontracted";
- The new partnership organisation, Toolbox, had recently been added to the partnership agreement (Paragraph 6).

Members' attention was drawn to the summary of the draft self-assessment judgement that York Learning had undertaken for 2016/17. It was pointed out that full-time NHS programmes to support the most vulnerable people across the City were well developed and good progression on other programmes such as counselling and modern foreign languages had been achieved. The Head of York Learning explained that the apprenticeship achievement was below minimum standards; this was attributed to the legacy issues such as the small number of learners and the local apprenticeship sectors being tough, with high staff turnaround rates.

Members sought clarification on a number of issues and the following was confirmed:

- The provision for learners who did not pass their GCSE English and Maths exams consisted of a one-year-long full-time course.
- The target for learners achieving a GCSE Maths was substantially exceeded (58 learners vs. the target of 38).
- The "Making the most of your money" project attracted individuals who could not be effectively supported by the team (i.e. individuals requiring more in-depth support) which resulted in the decision to withdraw from that subcontracted project.
- The fact that adults seeking opportunities to access learning needed to present proof of actively looking for work in order to be eligible could have contributed to the decrease in the overall interest in the provision, particularly at Level 2. However, there was an increased interest in enrolment in loan-funded Level 3 and 4 programmes which could be attributed to the opportunity of receiving a vocational qualification without the need to follow the rigorous criteria of other programmes such as apprenticeships.

- ICT enrolment targets were difficult to achieve. There was an interest within the younger generation but these courses could not always be funded; older people were often not able to afford them.

Members discussed the possible reasons why the service's success rates for apprenticeship were falling below minimum standards. It was explained that if 40% of the overall cohort were below standards, the whole cohort was judged to be below standards. It was added that York provided many health, social care and childcare courses which attracted people with low qualifications, for which the outcomes and retention rates were low nationally. It was also pointed out that it was not possible to change the CYC apprenticeship focus in York because specialist courses such as building or business administration were provided by colleges or private companies and CYC did not have facilities or expertise to implement such programmes.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the report and the initial findings of the service's self-assessment be noted.
  - (ii) That the opportunities and threats for the service identified within the latest Strategic Plan for 2017/18 be noted.
  - (iii) That the issues identified for the new academic year in Paragraph 8 be commented on in advance of the strategic plan being signed off by the Executive Member.

Reason: To help monitor the service and guide and challenge managers to ensure robust and accountable governance arrangements.

## 16. **PRESENTATION ON THE VISION FOR THE CITY'S LIBRARY SERVICE**

The Assistant Director for Communities and Equalities was in attendance to deliver a presentation (attached to the minutes) on the vision for the City's Library Service. He focused on the context of the project and outlined the milestones, including a

public consultation and a comprehensive statement of needs. It was explained that the overall vision was centred on learning and opportunity for all, which was in line with the ambition for public libraries in England. It was noted that:

- Explore York displayed strong performance despite being in the bottom third in terms of funding received;
- Co-location of services i.e. using the libraries as 'one-stop shops' was not being considered as this would not be in line with the overall vision of high-quality use of spaces.

Members discussed the need for comprehensive public consultation to be undertaken before implementation of any changes, emphasising that the project might raise some fears among residents that their local libraries could be closed. It was also noted that the location of the Tier Two Explore Libraries could be contested by some members of the public.

In regard to the planned consultation, Members expressed an interest in being consulted on the questions before they were agreed. Recognising the current demographic of library users, Members agreed that the consultation should be as broad as possible including not only regular users but less frequent users such as families with young children, young people as well as residents between 20 and 40 years old. Members agreed the best way to achieve a wide spectrum of responses would be to consult those groups by different mediums as well as to widely publicise the consultation. They also agreed that the timing of the consultation would be crucial to the likely response rates. Finally, Members questioned whether the vision outlined in the presentation would be fully supported given the amount of capita it required.

- Resolved:
- i) That the presentation on the Vision for the City's Library Service be noted and the Vision be updated in light of Committee's advice.
  - ii) That the Committee Members be consulted on the draft consultation questions before they are agreed
  - iii) That early publicity of the forthcoming libraries consultation be undertaken to take account of the Christmas period



Reason: So that the Vision may be updated before going out to the public consultation.

Action Required

1. The early publicity of the forthcoming libraries' consultation shall be undertaken. CC
2. Members shall oversee the questions to be asked as part of the consultation process. CC

**17. UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED 'WARD FUNDING' AND 'PLAY OPPORTUNITIES' SCRUTINY REVIEWS**

The Scrutiny Officer provided Members with their first update on the implementation of the approved recommendations arising from the two previously completed scrutiny reviews. Members were asked to sign off the recommendations that were fully implemented.

Members agreed to sign off a number of the Ward Funding Review recommendations, but agreed that Recommendation iii) should remain outstanding as the necessary work was still being progressed.

In regard to the Play Opportunities recommendations, Members requested an update on the capital programme be added to their workplan.

- Resolved:
- i) That the contents of the report be noted.
  - ii) That the Ward Funding Review recommendations i, ii, and vi-vii be signed off as fully implemented
  - iii) That all the Play Opportunities review recommendations remained outstanding
  - iv) That a further update on all outstanding recommendation be provided in six months.

Reason: To raise awareness of those recommendations which are still to be fully implemented.

**18. WORK PLAN 2017-18**

Members considered the Committee's work plan for the 2017/18 municipal year. The Scrutiny Officer confirmed that a bi-annual update from Make it York would be received by the Committee in November 2017 and May 2018, and that the Managing Director from Make it York would attend the November meeting only.

Members discussed undertaking a review of children's emotional health and wellbeing and agreed to hold an informal meeting in early December to receive an overview briefing to inform the remit of the topic. It was agreed the Committee would agree the scope of the review at its formal meeting in January 2018.

The Scrutiny Officer was tasked with finding an appropriate date.

Members also queried whether a review on school attendance was required and Officers confirmed that there were no specific associated issues that would benefit from a scrutiny review and therefore suggested this be removed from the workplan.

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

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

Cllr D Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 5:30pm and finished at 8:35pm].