

Meeting	Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	6 April 2021
Present	Councillors Baker (Chair), Webb (Vice-Chair), Daubeney, Fenton, Fitzpatrick, Heaton and Barker

71. 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 Fenton declared an interest as a Trustee of Foxwood Community Centre. Cllr Webb declared an interest as a Trustee of Tang Hall Community Centre. There were no further declarations of interest.

72. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 6 January 2021 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair.

73. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

74. 2020/21 FINANCE QUARTER 3 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 the projected overspend of £1million was nearly entirely due to children's social care partly as a result of the reduction in agency staff not coming to fruition. He further advised that there was an expected overspend in the Designated Schools Grant (DSG) and the deficit for this was expected to be over £1million. The Head of Finance (Adults, Children & Education) and Corporate Director of People were asked and clarified:

- The position with Danesgate. It was suggested that the Danesgate Headteacher be invited to a future committee meeting to meet the committee.
- The inclusion review had looked at provision for children with additional needs.
- There was a national review of placement provision
- There was 10 new foster carers in York
- Regarding out of town placements, there had been success in moving a number of children back to York. However, there are children whose needs are such that they need speciality support which may be outside the city.
- The review of vacancies was ongoing across the directorate. There was a tracker to look at the needs of children and plan appropriate placements for them
- Transport costs were not covered by the Designated Schools Grant (DSG) and came from the general fund. Generally the costs overall were less if children were placed in York
- Early intervention and assessment were more likely to prevent children from coming into care. Recalibration tended to see a rise in children with child protection plans and in the care of the local authority as their corporate parent
- In terms of budget planning for preventative work, budget planning for the following year had not begun but the preventative aspect would be part of the rationale for the budget going forward.
- If a child needed to come into the care of the authority then they would. There was a need to ensure that all parts of the system were based around preventative work, with the establishment of the MASH in York. The external review of MASH was very positive.
- The numbers of children coming into the system were reducing and the authority was much better at care planning

and it would take time to bring numbers down to circa 230 in line with statistical neighbours

- It was not known what the long term impact of the pandemic would be and what the impact would be on the numbers of referrals
- An update on court proceedings was given,
- Cllr Smalley (Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities) confirmed there had been a one off payment to Make it York (MiY) for a culture officer and this would be included in the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with MiY. (He declared an interest as a Director of MiY).
- Regarding 38 week placements, the council was trying to recruit different people as foster carers and some children may need to live in residential care and with foster carers looking after them during the school holidays
- Following a question about the overspend of £72,000 on educational psychologists, the Head of Finance undertook to check what the reason for this was.
- The restrictions on all discretionary spend referred to budget managers' discretionary spending

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.

75. COMMUNITY HUBS SCOPING REPORT

Members considered a report that presented information in support of a proposed scrutiny review of the roll out of the council's community hubs programme.

The Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities, Assistant Director Customer and Communities, Principal Neighbourhood Management Officer and Head of Commissioning gave an overview of the report were in attendance for the item. The Principal Neighbourhood Management Officer explained the background to the hubs and detailed how they had operated and responded to the needs of their communities during the pandemic. She was asked and explained:

- How the hubs had supported communities during the pandemic by helping residents with access to food, medicine and shopping. She noted that this undertaken by volunteers with hub staff coordinating. She added that that staff and volunteers had made regular phone calls to residents and since Christmas had rung up to 11,000 people.
- The work undertaken to engage communities less eager to be engaged.
- How the approach taken by the hubs had developed, including working with the local area teams.
- That responses were developed in relation to community need. The needs across the city were being mapped and the commissioning fund put together the previous year was looking at what commissioned services were needed.

Members thanked officers for their work during the pandemic.

Following a question about how city centre wards in need of support could be supported, the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities also thanked officers and suggested that the scrutiny review could include ward funding. It was noted that the COVID recovery fund information had been sent to Councillors.

The Chair outlined the proposed scope of the review as detailed at page 22 of the agenda pack. This was considered by Members and it was suggested that how ward funding was allocated and training for charities and community groups in writing funding bids could be added to the scope of the review. Officers confirmed that there had been awareness training sessions held in the past. The Assistant Director Customer and Communities confirmed there would be officer support for report writing. It was agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair would discuss where funding could fit into the review.

Resolved:

- i. That the remit of the review (as detailed at paragraph 15 of the report) be approved.
- ii. That Cllrs Fitzpatrick, Fenton and Webb be appointed to the task group
- iii. That the timeframe for the review was task and finish in January 2022.

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

76. WORK PLAN

Members considered items for future meetings. Suggestions for the workplan included updates on home to school transport, and an update on Danesgate. Membership for the Youth Mental Health task group was agreed as the Chair, Cllr Fitzpatrick, Cllr Webb and Cllr Daubeney.

[Cllr Barker left the meeting at 7.25pm]

During discussion about a potential review of Youth Justice at a future Forum meeting it was highlighted that this was being considered at a meeting of the Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee. The Democracy Officer undertook to check if the committee could attend the meeting. Further suggestions for items to be considered included:

- Safeguarding Partnership Bi-annual Update report, to include Adolescence strategy – suggested to be received formally at July meeting
- Permanence strategy
- Foster Carer Recruitment strategy to include explaining the current Foster Carer payment arrangements, including the independent review

Members considered the work plan to include the following items:

Forum 5 May 2021

- Inclusion Review and SEND updates including further discussion of High Needs issues, as necessary
- Youth mental health scoping review

Forum 7 June 2021

- CYPIC focus e.g. Permanence Strategy /Foster Carer Recruitment strategy
OR Commissioning VCS sector / Anchor institutions
- 2021-22 Work Planning

Committee 6 July 2021

- Youth services / holiday schemes update (to include update on how the holiday grant funding is being used)
- Leisure facilities update with specific question relating to young people

Forum 14 September 2021

- Financial monitor
- York (adult) Learning annual report (requested)
- and/or
- REACH update

Resolved: That the following above items for future meetings be put forward as part of corporate scrutiny work planning:

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 7.36 pm].