

Meeting	Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	21 July 2022
Present	Councillors Daubeney (Chair), Fitzpatrick, Hollyer, Hunter (Substitute for Cllr Baker), Looker (Substitute for Cllr Webb) and Orrell
Apologies	Councillor Heaton
In Attendance	Councillor Waller, Executive Member - Children, Young People and Education
Officers Present	Pauline Stuchfield - Director of Customer and Communities Jamaila Hussain - Interim Director of Children's Services, Director of Prevention & Commissioning Maxine Squire – Assistant Director, Education Angie Padfield – Head of York Learning Andy Laslett – Strategic Services Manager Customer & Communities

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## 1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (6.09 PM)**

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.

None were declared.

## 2. **MINUTES (6.10 PM)**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 28 June 2022 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the chair.

### **3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (6.10 PM)**

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

### **4. PERMANENT EMPLOYEE ABSENCE IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES (6.10 PM)**

The Interim Director, Children's Services presented the report on permanent employee absence in Children's Services. She noted that the reported figure of 28 absences, as at 08 July 2022, was mainly due to Covid. Those off with stress related illness had identified personal stress, rather than work related stress as the issue.

The Workforce Development Board have strategic oversight of employee absence and areas for improvement had been identified as follows:

- Methods for recording absence
- Clear absence policy
- Emphasis on well-being
- Retention

The officer responded to questions from Members on the number of staff within the service, retention, the process for managing staff return to work and the stability of the Children In Care team. She specifically noted the following:

- There were approximately 380 staff within the service area.
- There was a policy to keep in touch with workers prior to their return to work date on their fit note.
- The Children In Care team was one of the more stable teams in terms of staff turnover.

The Chair thanked officers for the work they had done within a tight timeframe and it was

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated in relation to staff absence matters within children's services.

## 5. YORK SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT BOARD UPDATE (6.46 PM)

The Assistant Director, Education and Skills, gave apologies for the Skills Team Manager, and presented the York Skills and Employment Board Update to the Committee. She explained that the Board had existed since September 2020 and was chaired by the Principal and Chief Executive of York College, Lee Probert. During Covid, the Board identified short term actions to support the work force for Covid recovery. It has since devised a 10 year skills strategy for the partnership to develop skills as part of the city's skills and economic strategy. CYC has provided support to the partnership through the skills team and is represented on the Board by herself and Cllr Waller, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education.

The Board was onto the implementation and delivery phase of the strategy and a representative of the Secondary Heads Group was to be invited to sit on the Board. York Learning and the council's Economic Development team also worked with the Board.

Cllr Waller added that the Board had been initiated as an emergency response to ensure access for young people to training and work experience as well as to retrain people who had lost their job. Through the Board, existing schemes had been signposted to potential user groups. The 10 year strategy is specific to York and looks ahead to the increased use of IT in industries as well as the STEM agenda, including women in STEM. He noted that it was necessary to ensure that the central government scheme to replace EU funding post Brexit, delivers on the courses needed. He also highlighted the increase in the number of apprenticeships within the council. He confirmed his own role on the Board was to promote inclusion to ensure all parts of the city were considered in decision making.

In response to comments from Members, the Executive Member noted that the heritage skills were what distinguished the strategy. He confirmed the development of green skills and the strength of digital arts within York.

It was also confirmed that plans, in the form of enterprise workshops, were in place to provide access for youth voice.

Resolved:

- i. To note the report.
- ii. That the Committee receive future updates on delivery of the commitments under the 10-year Skills Strategy on an annual basis.

Reason: To keep the committee updated and to inform the scrutiny work plan.

**6. YORK LEARNING - STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT 2021/22 (6.26 PM)**

The Head of York Learning, introduced the performance report for York Learning 2021/22. She highlighted the work that had been done to build partnerships with community groups to develop adult skills through bespoke courses. She mentioned that the learners on the Travellers Trust course had been provided with laptops through the IT Reuse project. Although progress to digital inclusion had gone well, digital skills had been hit during the pandemic. Post Covid, there was a lack of progression routes due to fewer entry level courses. This was expected to improve over the next year.

In preparation for devolution, there was a shared, Joint Head of Adult Learning services. Paul Cliff, Joint Head of York and North Yorkshire Adult Learning Services was introduced to Members and he reported that the challenge in York would be to change the traditional offer to support more aspects of community learning following future changes in devolved funding. The aim was to take a collaborative approach with partners and providers over the next three years to demonstrate a successful partnership. They also needed to alter their provision to connect with a different demographic, 19-25 year olds, to stimulate the economy and with the aim to become the gateway to the skills agenda.

In response to Members' questions it was noted that:

- It was hoped that centrally based premises could be found that had it's own identity as an adult learning environment for individuals and families.
- It was not possible to achieve 100% completion rates in Adult Education.
- European Social Fund (ESF) funding is due to finish in 2023, there may be a gap in funding.
- The European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) had been withdrawn as it no longer received funding. It was hoped that it could be reinstated as an employability qualification.

Resolved:

To note the content of the report.

Reason: To monitor the service, guide managers and ensure robust and accountable governance arrangements.

## **7. ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT: LIBRARIES AND LEISURE FACILITIES (5.32 PM)**

The Strategic Services Manager, Customer and Communities introduced the annual update report for Libraries and Leisure Facilities. He explained that both organisations had increased efforts during the pandemic and noted working in partnership as an important achievement.

The Explore Chief Operating Officer underlined the role of Explore during the pandemic as a mechanism for getting trusted information into communities. She highlighted the role of the Home Library Delivery Service as well as the digital skills support for job seekers. Explore were recruiting from within the community and had reviewed their volunteer opportunities.

During the discussion relating to hubs and digital access, it was noted Explore had a strong partnership with the Local Area Coordinators (LACs) in terms of digital inclusion support.

The York Partnership Manager for Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) explained that GLL is a London based not for profit social

enterprise. He highlighted the Healthwise programme at Burnholme Sports Centre which houses NHS outpatients physiotherapy departments and CYC Health Trainers. He also outlined the developments relating to the LNER Community Stadium which opened in May 2021.

During the discussion, he confirmed that the stadium management team had worked with First Bus and Vangarde to manage visitors to the stadium. It was also noted that investments at Yearsley Pool had been made to reduce running costs through LED lighting and pool covers. Supplies of chlorine had been carefully managed and the pool had remained open. The increasing cost of utilities was highlighted as an area of concern which would be monitored and reported on in the future.

Resolved:

That members note the activities of the Explore and GLL update reports.

Reason:

To support the Council's role in performance management of the library and leisure service contract.

## **8. WORK PLAN (7.08 PM)**

The Chair reported that he was to meet with the Vice-Chair and officers to finalise the work plan the following week.

Resolved:

That the updated Work Plan be brought to the next committee meeting.

Reason:

To ensure that the Scrutiny Committee is kept up to date with the Work Plan.

Cllr S Daubeney, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.10 pm].