

Meeting	Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	1 November 2022
Present	Councillors Daubeney (Chair), Orrell, Perrett (Substitute for Cllr Fitzpatrick) and Webb (Vice-Chair)
Apologies	Councillors Baker, Fitzpatrick, Heaton and Hollyer
In Attendance	Cllr Waller, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education (until 6.50 pm)
Officers Present	Martin Kelly - Corporate Director of Children and Education (DCS) Maxine Squire – Assistant Director of Education Richard Hartle – Head of Finance Children, Education & Schools Danielle Johnson - Director of Safeguarding, Children’s Service

9. Declarations Of Interest (5.32 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.

Cllr Webb declared a personal interest to agenda item 4 (The Safety Valve Agreement), in that he was an employee of the Pathfinder Multi Academy Trust. Cllr Daubeney declared a personal interest, in relation to item 5, the Finance First Quarter Monitoring Report, that he was a Director of City of York Trading, which included Work With York and procured staff for the council.

10. Minutes (5.33 pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 21 July 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

11. Public Participation (5.33 pm)

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

12. The Safety Valve Agreement (Quarter 1 And Quarter 2 Monitoring Reports) (5.33 pm)

The Assistant Director of Education presented the Quarter 1 and 2 Safety Valve Agreement monitoring reports. She explained the background to the Safety Valve Plan (SVP), which had been put in place to manage the deficit of the high needs block within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Members were informed that when the SEND reforms were introduced in 2014 the full financial impact of introducing the Education, Health and Care plans to 25 had not been assessed by central government and the financial settlement for local authorities had been based on the numbers of statements pre 2014. Statements had ended at age 16 whereas EHCPs provided support up to age 18-25, this has led to increased financial pressures. Members were informed that the identified priorities of the SVP were not solely concerned with deficit management but about implementing actions as part of the overall SEND improvement journey in York.

In response to questions from Members covering support for children in school to reduce the need for an EHCP, demand management, the progress of the SEND review green paper, enhanced resource provision in mainstream schools, contingency funding for children relocating to York and ensuring that children are not overlooked, the officer noted the following:

- Training programmes for teachers and SEND Champions had been developed to reduce the need for EHCPs. With the right support at the right time, a formal assessment (EHCP) was not always needed. A mix of provision

(including York College and social enterprises) was available to enable a flexible end point for support.

- There were no plans for a government white paper on the SEND review, some aspects could be implemented without legislation.
- The autism suites in schools were successful models, 10 additional places in another secondary school were planned.
- Communication was the focus for Quarter 3, plans were in place to reach people who do not make use of the usual communication platforms.

Resolved: That the Committee noted the progress made to date on the delivery of the Safety Valve recovery agreement between the Department for Education and the council.

Reason: Quarterly monitoring is required for the grant agreement that the council had signed up to.

13. 2022/23 Finance First Quarter Monitoring Report - Children, Education & Communities (6.00 pm)

The Head of Finance for Children, Education and Schools introduced the Finance First Quarter Monitoring Report which had been presented to the Executive meeting in August 2022. He highlighted a projected overspend of £7.5m and noted the largest contributing factors were the placement costs of children in social care, agency staffing and home to school transport. He also confirmed that they were on track to deliver the Safety Valve Plan (SVP) and expected to return a balance in 2.5 years.

Responses were given to Member questions covering placement costs and temporary staff. Officers confirmed that the care market was demand led, and work was on going to bring more care placements in house. Best provision, at best value, had been sought through the commissioning process. It was expected that the financial statement for Quarter 2 would show improvements to the costs associated with agency staff.

The Chair noted that he had received a request from the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee to monitor the projected overspend, specifically the use of agency

staff. He confirmed that key performance data reports would come to the next meeting.

Resolved: That the Committee note the report.

Reason: To keep the committee updated on the latest financial position for 2022/23.

14. Ofsted Action Plan (6.12 pm)

The Director of Safeguarding, Children's Services provided an update to the committee on the Ofsted Action Plan and highlighted paragraph 4, points a-g of the report.

The officer responded to questions from Members on improving consistent feedback, the quality of supervision, unregulated placements and the design of care plans and quality assessments.

Members were informed that:

- Feedback was focused on being jargon-free, easy to understand, with clear decisions combined with a written rationale for them.
- Quality of supervision would improve through feedback from practitioners, learning conversations and child voice. A 'deep dive' was planned for next year.
- To improve the design of care plans, young people would continue to review and be actively involved in their care plan.

The Corporate Director of Children and Education explained that the council had a legal sufficiency duty to ensure that there were sufficient correct placements available for children. He identified the need to build capacity within the council for both foster and residential care.

Resolved: The Committee noted the progress of the action plan.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated on the progress of the action plan.

15. City Of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (6.26 pm)

The Corporate Director of Children and Education (DCS) gave a presentation on the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP).

Members were informed that from December 2022, there would be a permanent leadership team across Children's Services and alongside statutory safeguarding partners in the CYSCP.

It was highlighted that the Independent Scrutineer, Dr Maggie Atkinson, had reported that safeguarding had remained a central focus of the Partnership and her official report would be published by the end of the year. He also noted that she would be stepping down from her role in December and placed on record his thanks for her service. He confirmed the intention was to have a replacement by the end of December / early January 2023.

He identified some key areas for development, such as developing children's voice, and some areas of concern including resourcing, the national cost of care provision for young people which he noted was a national problem, and the rise in mental health issues post pandemic.

Members asked several questions covering the Youth Justice Inspection, Early Help funding, children's voice and the Mind of My Own App.

The officer confirmed that the outcome of the Youth Justice Inspection was currently embargoed however, they were pleased with the outcome. York was well represented on the Integrated Care Service Board (ICS) and this provided opportunities to resource Early Help. The Mind of My Own App was well established and enabled children to provide feedback and offered ongoing interaction with social workers.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated on the CYSCP.

16. Work Plan (6.50 pm)

The Chair reported that he had received a request to move the Yorkshire Museums Trust (YMT) item from December to the following meeting in March. It was agreed to bring forward to December the York Citizens' Theatre Trust, annual review, and to move the YMT item to March 2023.

The Vice-Chair requested the independent scrutiny report on the CYSCP to be distributed to the Committee once published.

It was noted that the Ofsted Area SEND re-visit (the inspection of the local areas' effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities) was underway. The Vice-Chair suggested the Committee could receive feedback on this item at a Commissioned Slot in January.

Resolved:

- i. To swap the YMT and York Citizens Theatre Trust items as described above and amend the Work Plan accordingly.
- ii. To request the Committee receive the scrutiny report for CYSCP when published.
- iii. To request a Commissioned Slot in January to receive feedback from the Ofsted visit above and to consider any other items that have not been added to the Work Plan.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee discharges its statutory duties and covers all items on the Work Plan.

Cllr S Daubeney, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.31 pm and finished at 6.54 pm].