

Meeting	Learning & Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	13 July 2016
Present	Councillors Craghill (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Wells, Mercer (as a Substitute for Cllr Dew) and Reid (as a Substitute for Cllr Jackson), Dr J Dickinson (Co-opted Statutory Member) and Mr A Hagon (Co-opted Statutory Member)
Apologies	Councillors S Barnes, Brooks, Dew and Jackson.

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## **6. Declarations of Interest**

Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests or disclosable pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. No interests were declared.

## **7. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Learning and Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 May 2016 be approved a correct record and then signed by the Chair.

## **8. Public Participation**

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

## **9. Attendance of Executive Member for Education, Children & Young People's Services - Priorities & Challenges for 2016-17**

The Executive Member for Education, Children and Young People was in attendance at the meeting and provided an overview of work within his portfolio.

The Executive Member confirmed he was very new to the role having only held the position for four weeks. He also advised that he was keen and willing to engage with the committee as much as possible and if members of the committee had concerns about any forthcoming Executive business he was happy to hear their views early through the pre-decision scrutiny process .

He explained how they looked at the work of Children's Services, Education and Skills under three broad areas: firstly, whether they were achieving the required results and whether the children and young people were achieving; secondly whether the authority was providing them with a safe environment and lastly whether the systems and processes in place were resilient. He provided context and details of priorities under each of those areas.

He informed the committee of the four main issues which he saw as challenges in relation to education and care moving forward over the next year.

- Acadamisation programme – Need to make best use of agenda in place, and ensure schools have the knowledge base to make informed decisions as they move forward. This would bring with it challenges in relation to school numbers and admissions and a relationship change between the local authority and those academies as they convert.
- Changes in educational qualifications and the way children are assessed and monitored at all key stages would make monitoring results over the next few years very challenging. It would also affect those in the workplace where there was currently little knowledge base within employment and business cycles on those changes.

- Local Area Teams –Need to move support packages into a more collaborative approach out in the communities where we get to know families rather than dealing with individuals to prevent problems falling through the gap.
- Child Social Care Restructure –Not about reducing numbers of staff but looking at skills base to ensure members of staff are focussed where their skills are best used.

The Executive Member responded to, and provided additional information in relation to, specific issues raised by Members.

The Director of Children’s Services, Education and Skills advised that officers should be in a position to provide a progress report on Children’s Centres at the March meeting.

Resolved: (i) That the update from the Executive Member be received and noted.

(ii) That an update on the Local Area Teams be provided to Members in March 2017.

Reason: To update the Committee on the challenges and priorities within the Executive Member’s Portfolio area.

## **10. 2015/16 Finance and Performance Draft Outturn Report**

Members considered a report which provided an analysis of the financial outturn position and performance data for 2015-16 by reference to the service plans and budgets for all of the relevant services falling under the responsibility of the Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods and the Director of Children’s Services, Education and Skills.

The Finance Manager (Adults, Children and Education) and the Strategy and Policy Group Manager were in attendance at the meeting to present the report. They informed Members that the draft outturn overspend for 2015-16 of just under £900,000 for the year was an improvement of over £400,000 since quarter 3. They advised that there was pressure across Children’s Services, in particular Children’s Social Care, but that this was offset by savings in other areas including Education and Skills

and other mitigation savings. They responded to, and provided more details on, specific issues which were raised by committee members during discussion on the report.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the committee on the latest financial and performance position for 2015-16.

## **11. 30 Hours Free Childcare for Working Families - Introductory Report**

Members considered a report which provided an update on progress with the early implementation of a new statutory entitlement to 30 hours free childcare for working families.

A Policy and Planning Manager was in attendance at the meeting to present the report. She explained that York was one of eight early implementers across the country chosen to deliver the pilot programme from September 2016, a year in advance of its roll out across the rest of the country. York was also the only local authority within the pilot who had been asked to test delivery across the whole local authority area which gave it the highest profile.

She confirmed the authority had made significant progress, holding two rounds of information sessions for providers in York to address concerns about the hourly rate, competition and short timescales. The hourly rate had been the biggest challenge for some nurseries and this had been raised with the DfE who accepted that York had been historically underfunded. As a result the DfE had given an additional uplift on the existing rate paid by the local authority to providers for all families who met the eligibility criteria for 30 hours free childcare. She reported that there had been very positive feedback from providers with 70% now signed up from all sectors. She explained that they needed to clarify to those not yet signed up that not all providers would be expected to deliver all of the 30hrs provision and that they should be ready to signpost parents to other providers. She advised that the key challenges which still needed to be addressed included inclusion funding, closing the attainment gap, quality of provision and high quality workforce, details of which were provided in the report.

Resolved: (ii) That the report be noted

(ii) That Members receive a further update report in approximately six months time.

Reason: To update the committee on the early implementation.

## **12. Opportunities for Play Scrutiny Review -Scoping Report**

Members considered a scoping report which provided information in support of a proposed scrutiny review on developing high quality play opportunities for children, young people and families across the city through meaningful engagement and sharing of good practice, and provided a suggested remit for the review for members' consideration. The agenda papers also contained a report entitled "Review of Play Policy, Playground Investment and Maintenance" which had been considered by the Executive Member for Economic Development and Community Engagement at his decision session on 24<sup>th</sup> May, following pre-decision consideration by scrutiny members, and the draft updated play policy. The Head of Communities was in attendance at the meeting.

Members acknowledged the importance of understanding need and how young people want to play and noted that the need in specific areas of the city would change as demographics changed. The committee agreed that with the required background knowledge, techniques and skills they could add value to work already being carried out by engaging with young people in communities through youth groups, schools etc to hear their views. Evidence gathered could help identify small areas of need which could then be considered by Officers and mapped to help influence where future money could be best spent.

Members agreed to proceed with the review based on the review aim and objectives detailed below:

"With the aim of developing improved play opportunities across the city and identifying ways of enabling communities to bring forward potential schemes.

- (i) Examine national best practice and methodology and consider examples of recent good practice locally from engagement through to delivery of a project.
- (ii) Identify future positive ways to engage with children, young people and families in order to evidence local need and inform the development of play opportunities at a neighbourhood level.
- (iii) Examine how best to allay resident's concerns and improve buy in from the whole community, thereby improving community/ward cohesion
- (iv) Identify best ways (methodology) to bring forward/ develop potential new schemes"

In addition to the above objectives it was agreed that a further objective be added " *To look at where the gaps are across the city and where the lack of community capacity makes identifying need more challenging*"

It was agreed that a Task Group be set up to undertake the review and that this would comprise Councillors Craghill, Fenton and Wells.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the Committee proceed with the review based on the proposed review remit and additional objective detailed above.
  - (ii) That a task group be set up to carry out the review on the Committee's behalf and this comprise Councillors Craghill, Fenton and Wells.

Reason: To ensure compliance with scrutiny procedures, protocols and workplans.

### **13. Learning and Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee Draft Workplan for 2016/17**

Members considered the committee's work plan for the 2016/17 municipal year.

Members noted that an update on the entitlement to 30 hrs Free Childcare for Working Families would be provided at the January meeting and that a further report on the recommendations arising from the previously completed

Narrowing the Gap scrutiny review would be provided at a future meeting of the committee.

Resolved: That the work plan be agreed subject to the amendments detailed above.

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

Cllr Craghill, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.00 pm].