

Meeting	Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date	5 December 2023
Present	Councillors Nicholls (Chair), Crawshaw, Cuthbertson, Knight, Waller, Wells, Baxter (Substitute for Councillor Clarke) (until 6:15pm), Melly (Substitute for Councillor Wilson), Merrett (Substitute for Councillor Nelson) (until 6:55pm), and Runciman (Substitute for Councillor Pearson)
Apologies	Councillors Clarke, Nelson (Vice-Chair), Pearson, Wilson
Officers in Attendance	Richard Hartle – Head of Children and Education Finance Martin Kelly – Corporate Director, Childrens and Education Danielle Johnson – Director of Children’s Services Safeguarding Karron Young – Head of Service – Virtual School and Inclusion Services Sarah Colley – Senior Lawyer (Children)

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## **21. Declarations of Interest (5:33pm)**

Members were asked to declare at this point in the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest they might have in respect of business on the agenda if they had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. None were declared.

## **22. Exclusion of Press and Public (7:09pm)**

Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following:

Annex I to Agenda Item 8 (Virtual School Annual Report 2022/2023) on the grounds that it contained information relating to any individual and information which was likely to reveal the identity of an individual. This information was classed as exempt under paragraphs 1 and 2 of

Part 1 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as revised by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

**23. Minutes (5:33pm)**

Resolved: That the approval of the minutes of the committee held on 7 November 2023 be deferred to the next meeting.

**24. Public Participation (5:33pm)**

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Chris Hoyle spoke on agenda item 7, Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2022/23. He outlined his own lived experience and addressed the difficulties faced as a former looked after child raising his own children without adequate corporate grandparenting support from the council. He addressed the practical support the council could provide as a corporate grandparent, which included, incorporating additional school admissions priority criteria in the council's school admissions policies for the children of any formally looked after person.

**25. 2023/24 Finance and Performance Monitor 2 (5:38pm)**

The Head of Children and Education Finance presented the report.

In response to questions from members, The Head of Children and Education Finance, and the Corporate Director, Children and Education confirmed that:

- Educational Psychologists were increasingly moving into the private sector, and this was a nationwide trend.
- The number of Children Looked After (CLA) in York had consistently been at a higher level than the budget was originally built to accommodate.
- Direct payments were used to support parents in commissioning their own services, and a review into historic direct payments was in progress with completion expected by the end of the current financial year.

- The York Independent Living and Transport Skills (YILTS) Team was still in operation.
- The number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) going up to age-25 were reducing, and EHCPs were being increasingly reviewed to assist young people in being more independent and to locate suitable employment. This would not directly link to a reduction in EHCP spend due to other factors.
- The number of children in temporary accommodation during 2020/2021 was low due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and government advice at that time.
- All Safety Valve Agreement targets had been met and the council was receiving all funding that it was eligible for.

The Chair congratulated committee members who were involved in the council's Early Talk for York programme which had won the Learning Award at the Children and Young People Now Awards 2023.

Resolved: That the report be noted:

Reason: To ensure expenditure is kept within the approved budget.

## **26. Children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers Update (6:35pm)**

The Director of Children's Services Safeguarding presented the report.

In response to questions from members, the Director of Children's Services Safeguarding and Corporate Director, Children and Education confirmed that:

- The number of Children in Care accessing a dentist had increased.
- A commitment in funding had been secured for £100,000 from the York and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) to alleviate the impact on young people when becoming independent.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To keep members updated on key elements in relation to Children and Young People in Care.

## **27. Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report (6:59pm)**

The Director of Children's Services Safeguarding presented the report and members discussed their role as a Corporate Parent.

The committee thanked the young people who had supported the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report and it was suggested that the annual report should be presented under a specific agenda item to Full Council by the Executive Member for Children and Young People and a care experienced young person, should they wish to attend.

Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

- i. That the working group established to review the Constitutional changes for onward endorsement by the Audit and Governance Committee be requested to consider including that the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report, under a specific agenda item, be presented annually to Full Council by the Executive Member for Children and Young People and a care experienced young person, should they wish to attend.

Reason: So that due attention was given to the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report by Full Council.

- ii. That the report be noted.

Reason: To keep members updated on the work of the Corporate Parenting Board.

## **28. Virtual School Annual Report 2022/2023 (7:09pm)**

The Head of Service – Virtual School and Inclusion Services presented the report.

In response to questions from members, it was confirmed that:

- Statistically York had fewer suspensions comparatively to national figures, however there was a national increase in suspensions.

- When pupils could not access a full curriculum, primary and secondary schools worked with the Virtual School to offer a blended curriculum.
- Funding from the Department for Education (DfE) for the Virtual School was allocated for pupils from 4-15 years of age and pupils could opt-in or out of post-16 education.
- Every school suspension was scrutinised by the Virtual School, and they worked with schools to reduce the number of suspensions issued.
- In regard to KS4 progress, the Virtual School was piloting a scheme in schools to investigate if further interventions and support was needed.

Resolved: That the Virtual School Annual report be received with a further update in the next academic year.

Reason: To keep members updated on the work of the Virtual School for children in care.

## **29. Work Plan (8:00pm)**

Members considered the Committee's work plan for the 2023/24 municipal year.

Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

- i. That following a motion of Full Council, York City Football Club's impact on culture, and ways which City of York Council could support the club and the York City Football Club Foundation be considered at the committee's meeting scheduled for 9 April 2024.
- ii. That the Chair liaises with the Chair of Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee regarding the housing strategy and the improved pathways relating to temporary accommodation for Children Looked After (CLA) and report back this committee to enable members to consider the most efficient option to proceed with this topic in the next municipal year.

Reason: To keep the Committee's work plan for the 2023/24 municipal year updated.

Cllr Nicholls, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 8.06 pm].