
Meeting	Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee
Date	11 September 2018
Present	Councillors D Taylor (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Brooks, Crawshaw, Lisle (as a Substitute for Cllr Rawlings) and Wells
Apologies	Councillors Jackson and Rawlings

18. 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. None were declared.

19. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 10 July 2018 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair.

20. Public Participation

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

21. York's Skills Plan 2017-20 Update

Members considered a report that updated them on what actions were being undertaken by the Skills Team (with stakeholders) and ongoing outcomes with respect to the following aims of the York Skills Plan: developing, retaining and attracting talent in York; and making sure no one was left behind.

The Learning City Partnership Manager was in attendance to give an update and she confirmed:

- The Skills Plan would contribute towards ambitions set out in both the York Economic Strategy 2016-2020 and the Council Plan 2015-2019.
- An outline of the key priorities, actions and ambitions of the Skills Plan was available on the Council website: https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/download/3957/york_skills_plan_2017-2020
- The York Economic Strategy aimed to make York a top 10 UK city for employment, with:
 - (i) high employment rates
 - (ii) high levels of skills and qualifications
 - (iii) wages above national average by 2025

In terms of Objective 1: Members were informed of a new initiative called York Career Ready. The programme was being developed in partnership with various employers in York and would help support sixth form students and care leavers looking to stay and work locally to progress successfully into apprenticeships by providing them with masterclasses, company visits, mentoring and internships with local businesses.

The officer continued to outline the targets set for York and the progress against the objectives, focussing on the five essential 'to-dos'.

Officers answered Members questions where it was noted that:

- Outcomes from the York Apprenticeship Recruitment events and from the York Job Fairs were monitored.
- The HGV driver gap was being addressed and apprenticeship training was available.
- The heritage skills sector would be investigated and should the evidence show a shortage in this area an intervention would be considered.
- European funded programmes would be honoured to 2020 and the winners of the two DWP bids (to support young people's progression into employment, prevent NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and support those that were NEET) would shortly be announced.
- English Social Funding (or equivalent) would replace European Social Funding and the current European funding programme that officers were awaiting an outcome for would total around £850,000 for York over a 3 year period.
- Officers were working with York St John University and Leeds City College on Objective 4. In response to

employer demand, a number of higher/degree level apprenticeships for Laboratory Technicians, Data Science, Chartered Management and Master of Business Administration (MBA) had been developed. This area was also highlighted as amber in the Economic Strategy and officers agreed this objective required additional content in the Plan.

- All apprenticeships recruited through the City of York Council apprenticeship programme were tracked and although some did not result in a permanent employment, they provided the relevant skills to seek a clear career path and employment within the region.
- Apprenticeship taster sessions would be held in January 2019 for students in Year 11 in response to feedback and requests from members of Show Me That I Matter.

Some Members raised concerns regarding a number of schools removing the vocational and employability programmes for young people who were at risk of becoming NEET. The Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities confirmed that school funding and how national league tables reported was a barrier but that the Local Authority had been engaging with staff that designed the curriculums for schools and colleges to encourage the use of more vocational learning to support the different learning needs and styles of young people. It was suggested that this issue could be a possible scrutiny review topic.

Members thanked officers for their update and noted that the Economic Growth Strategy was also being reviewed and would be brought to a future Children and Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved:

- (i) That the update be noted and that Members comments be taken into account when progressing the Plan.
- (ii) That the outcomes from the York Apprenticeship Recruitment events and York Job Fairs be provided at a future meeting.
- (iii) That Committee Members be emailed performance data around City of York Council apprenticeships.

Reason: To keep Members up to date on progress of the development of York's Skills Plan 2017-20.

22. York Learning - Strategic Plan Update and Progress Report 2017/18

Members consider a report that presented the end of academic year performance data for York Learning.

The Head of York Learning gave an update and confirmed:

- Performance reports from York Job Fairs could be provided but officers were reliant on employers reporting back.
- The increase in apprenticeships, particularly with 16-18 year olds, was partly due to an incentive payment of £1000 to employers who recruit apprentices.
- There had been a gratifying increase against the target of 19+ receiving a GCSE in English.

The Head of York Learning answered Members questions and discussions took place around the new opportunities and threats identified in the latest Strategic Plan, including benchmarks, apprenticeships and the provision around improving English and maths.

Members noted that the latest Strategic Plan for 2018/19 would be signed off by the Executive Member and they thanked the officer for his update.

Resolved:

- (i) That Members comments on the performance of York Learning and on the issues identified for the new academic year, in paragraph 8 of the report, be taken into account for when the strategic plan was signed off by the Executive Member.
- (ii) That additional statistical data around apprenticeships be provided at a future meeting.

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

23. 2018/19 Finance and Performance First Quarter Report - Children, Education & Communities

Members considered a report that analysed the latest performance for 2018/19 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 Corporate Director of Children, Education & Communities.

The Finance Manager gave an update and highlighted the finance and performance headlines and confirmed the projected overspend for the year for the directorate was around £1.25million. He brought to Members attention the significant pressures within children social care particularly around supporting the current cohort of looked after children and home to school transport within Special Educational Needs.

The Finance Manager and Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities answered Members questions where it was noted that:

- The introduction of 'golden hello' and 'golden handcuff' payments had proved to be successful within the children social care, referral and assessment teams. This approach would be extended to the safeguarding service area where a holistic recruitment strategy had also been designed to attract permanent social worker staff to York and reduce the amount of agency staff used.
- Educational Psychologists pay had increased to match regional salaries and the team had increased in size to lower case loads.
- The Looked After Children cohort was increasing and the cost of care and placements was a pressure to consider going forward.
- An update on the additional funds allocated to tackle the attainment gap would be noted in the quarter two report.
- The projected overspend within ward committees was mainly due to unbudgeted grounds maintenance costs in parish areas.
- The percentage of children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time had risen and reasons for this were discussed.

The Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities informed the Committee that OFSTED were carrying out a joint targeted area inspection of child sexual abuse within the family week commencing 24 September 2018, where the interim Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities would take the lead.

Following further discussions around the overspends in Education and Skills, particularly the pressures in the home to school transport and the special education needs budgets, the Corporate Director suggested Members should monitor this pressure in more detail. It was noted that this was a national pressure and that officers were considering solutions through an inclusion review where a selection of staff from York schools had formed a task group to test the current provision.

Members thanked officers for their update and suggested future reports include more regional statistical data comparisons.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the Committee on the latest financial and performance position for 2018/19.

24. Work Plan 2018/19

Members considered the Committees work plan for the 2018/19 municipal year.

Members thanked the Corporate Director of Children, Education & Communities for all his help and support over the years and wished him well in his new post.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the work plan be updated to include a Cultural Strategy update at the 7 November meeting.

Resolved:

- (i) That the work plan be approved subject to the above amendments/additions.
- (ii) That the 15 January 2019 Committee date be changed to 8 January 2019.
- (iii) That the Committee be contacted by the new Scrutiny Officer to arrange an informal meeting.

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

Cllr Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30pm and finished at 7.25pm].