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Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
Date	8 November 2022
Present	Councillor Waller
In Attendance	Alison Edeson (Skills Team Manager) Martin Kelly (Corporate Director Children and Education) Rob Newton (Social Mobility Project Manager) Nicola Sawyer (Early Years Entitlement and Sufficiency Manager) Maxine Squire (Assistant Director Education and Skills)

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#### **17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [10.00]**

The Executive Member was asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests that he may have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

#### **18. MINUTES [10.01]**

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 15 March 2022 be approved and signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

#### **19. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION [10.02]**

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme. Cllr Lomas, Ward Councillor for Acomb, spoke on agenda item 4 Childcare Sufficiency Review. She explained problems with travel in Acomb and that it was poorly served regarding a lack of access and suitable childcare. She outlined what good childcare for vulnerable families would be, and explained that there was a lack of provision for disabled children and children with additional needs. She asked if the Executive Member would

work with the two local MPs in contacting the Secretary of State regarding childcare.

In response to comments made by Cllr Lomas, the Executive Member noted that active travel had not been blocked and that he had asked that all schools were consulted on it.

## **20. CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY REVIEW [10.07]**

The Executive Member considered a report that provided an on a review of childcare sufficiency across the city to understand the impact of low funding and recruitment and retention challenges on the early years and childcare sector. He noted that there were pressures due to a number of providers closing. The Assistant Director Education and Skills explained the access arrangements to childcare for children with SEND and she urged those parents to have discussions with their local childcare settings. Regarding housing developments, she explained that Section 106 (S106) contributions were written into developments.

The Assistant Director Education and Skills explained that the position was challenging for early years settings as they were funded in the same way as schools and there were national issues around funding. The Early Years Entitlement and Sufficiency Manager outlined the report, detailing the duty to provide sufficient early years and childcare, as far as is reasonably practicable. She explained that the Family Information Service supported families in finding childcare and that the council worked closely with providers regarding supply through the survey. She reported that only 85 providers had replied to the survey this year compared to over 130 last year and that there were also regular meetings with providers through the early years network which enabled further local intelligence to be gathered. She noted that issues with the sector were from historic underfunding, COVID and the current economic climate. She added that Ofsted had recommenced inspections following the pandemic and this causing an added pressure on settings.

The Early Years Entitlement and Sufficiency Manager noted the current situation for unmet demand from the provider point of view and added that although a number of providers had recently closed the vast majority expected to remain open for a further year. She was asked and confirmed that the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment would be completed during January

2023. The Executive Member noted the fragility of the childcare market and the importance to give the opportunity to childcare to all children in the city.

In response to a question from the Executive Member on the training and retention of early years staff, the Skills Team Manager explained that there was a workforce development campaign for the sector, and she highlighted the apprenticeship levy transfer. She encouraged businesses to contact the apprenticeship hub regarding the apprenticeship levy transfer.

The Early Years Entitlement and Sufficiency Manager was asked and confirmed that there was early years networking and that the improvement advisor team worked closely with the sector. She added that information sessions had been provided and the sector had been asked to provide feedback at other meetings.

The Executive Member thanked staff in response to pressures on the service and he;

Resolved: That;

- i. The content of the report be noted.
- ii. That the Executive Member, in conjunction with Officers, raise the issue of low funding, recruitment and retention and status of the sector as vulnerable with the Secretary of State for Education.
- iii. That Officers contact Ward Councillors in the Acomb, Bishopthorpe, City Centre, Dringhouses and Woodthorpe, Haxby and Wigginton, Huntington and New Earswick, Rawcliffe and Clifton Without and Rural West Wards about unmet demand. Due to amendments in the data, contact will be made with the ward councillors in the following wards Acomb, Bishopthorpe, City Centre, Dringhouses and Woodthorpe, Heworth and Heworth Without and Rawcliffe and Clifton Without
- iv. That a report on the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment be presented to the Executive Member at his Decision Session in February 2022.

Reason: To acknowledge the challenges faced by the early years and childcare sector in York, regionally and nationally and to escalate to the Secretary of State

for Education to implement national solutions and provide continued support with the cost of living.

**21. EARLY TALK FOR YORK [10.25]**

The Executive Member considered a report that detailed the outcomes of Early Talk for York and asked him to support the full rollout of the Early Talk for York approach. The Social Mobility Project Manager outlined the report detailing the aims, development and outcome of the scheme. He explained the work undertaken with the three schools involved in the scheme and how universal screening had been scaled up across the city. He noted the outcomes and impact of Early Talk for York, including the difference in outcomes for disadvantaged children involved in the scheme. He also noted the impact of COVID. He outlined the current position noting that the offer of a universal screening tool had been made, with 82% of providers signed up to using the tool. He added that there had been great partnership working, for example with family learning and the University of York. He then explained the next steps which was to expand universal screening.

In response to questions from the Executive Member, he explained that:

- Despite COVID, there had been improvements in outcomes nationally and improvements had been learnt as a result of Early Talk for York.
- Regarding the longevity of work to ensure long term improvements in social mobility and equality of access to education, schools and academies were maintaining investment in Early Talk for York.

The Executive Member acknowledged the flexibility of the approach for each setting, He thanked staff for their work on Early Talk for York and then;

Resolved: That;

- i. Support be given to the full rollout of Early Talk for York across the city.
- ii. A report measuring the outcomes of the full rollout of Early Talk for York be presented to the Executive Member in one year (November 2023).

Reason: Early Talk for York is demonstrating impact on improving children's outcomes in line with the original Theory of Change. Of particular note is that children's outcomes have continued to improve in the Early Talk for York area during the pandemic window whilst those in other areas have declined. This is particularly so for those children who are disadvantaged. As this work has demonstrated Early Talk for York appears to be an effective way of improving outcomes, particularly for the disadvantaged cohort, a roll out across the city is recommended so more children can benefit from this approach.

## **22. APPRENTICESHIPS UPDATE [10.40]**

The Executive Member considered a report which provided an update on apprenticeships. The Skills Team Manager explained that the report covered a six month period. She reported that the quarter 3 apprenticeship figures for York were promising, with 980 apprenticeship starts, including a circa 14% increase on 16-18 year old apprenticeship starts. She added that the national full-year provisional figure was showing similar improvements.

The Skills Team Manager noted that there had been between 100 and 180 vacancies listed each week on the national website, within a 15-mile radius of York. Following the usual 'dip' in September, there had been an uplift in advertised vacancies during October, with a range of entry level roles. She explained that work with the apprenticeship hub took place across the city with 725 students in Year 7 to 11 taking part and she noted the work with NYBEP. She noted that at the council there were 80 active apprenticeships, which was a 50% increase on the previous year. She advised that the council had met its public sector target for 2021/22. She invited businesses to apply for the apprenticeship levy.

The Executive Member thanked the Skills Team Manager and teams for their work on apprenticeships. He noted the interest from the FSB regarding the levy transfer. He then;

Resolved: That;

- i. The content of the report be noted.

- ii. Future Apprenticeships Update reports be presented quarterly with the next report to include an update on information to changes in legislation.

Reason: To continue to encourage the creation of apprenticeship opportunities in York, by supporting local businesses to access available funding and to support routes to employment for residents.

Cllr Waller, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.47 am].