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Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	12 April 2021
Present	Councillors Crawshaw (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Hunter, Hollyer, Kilbane, Rowley, Musson, Mason and Wann (Substitute)
Apologies	Councillor Pearson

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Chair's opening remarks: In light of the recent sad loss of HRH Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, the Chair held a moment's silence in memory of his HRH and all those who had lost loved ones during the Covid-19 world pandemic.

#### **85. Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, the Chair invited Members to declare any personal, pecuniary or prejudicial interests, which they had not already included in their standing register of interests. None were declared.

#### **86. Minutes**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed at a later date subject to a typographical error in Minute No. 80 of the previous meeting being corrected where the date referred to should be 8 February 2021 and not March 2021.

Arising from the minutes of the last meeting, Cllr Kilbane requested an update on the future of remote meetings. In response, the Chair indicated that he intended to request the Monitoring Officer to update the Committee under Minute No. 88 below.

## **87. Public Participation**

In accordance with the Council's arrangements for public participation at meetings, Councillor Douglas had registered to speak. At the invitation of the Chair, she spoke in relation to Minute No. 89 commenting upon the importance of the Council's procurement strategy in assisting the city's recovery from the pandemic and stressing the need to embed social value into those procurement arrangements. She asked the Committee to consider reviewing the Council's existing arrangements and how the Council resources could be best utilised to develop improvements.

## **88. Public Health Update on Covid-19**

Members received a verbal update and presentation from the Director of Public Health on the latest figures and information relating to the impact of the virus around the city, specifically covering:

- 7 incidence rates, in relation to which York's overall rates were below national and regional averages;
- 7 day positivity rate with 4 symptom free testing sites across the city and 2 for those with symptoms and a move towards a community collect model of tests;
- 7 day rate by wards;
- Care homes cases with none since 25 February 2021 reported;
- School cases, with only 7 children testing positive since 25 February 2021;
- Hospital admissions with 6 admissions and 1 in intensive care as of 6 April 2021;
- Excess deaths, with 181 recorded since the beginning of the pandemic;
- Local contact tracing cases completed;
- Covid vaccination update by age (with over 12% of adults having had 2 doses), by ethnicity (with a variance in take-up across different groups) and by ward (with Guildhall having the lowest take-up);
- Barriers to access and work ongoing to address access in equalities;
- Ongoing partnership working with CCG and Nimbus Care

The Director of Public Health then responded to a range of questions around the positivity rate, lateral flow tests, variants, the vaccination programme, potential future surges and any lessons learnt from the recent peer review.

The Chair then invited the Monitoring Officer to update Members on the future of remote and face-to-face meetings in the light of the Government's expressed intention not to extend existing legislation for the operation of remote meetings beyond 7 May 2021. The Monitoring Officer outlined the current position, incorporating the Government's stipulations around the ways in which local authorities could make their decisions moving forward. She reported that a judicial review had been lodged in the high court seeking the retention of remote meetings given the ongoing need to continue to manage the spread of the virus, the outcome was anticipated around the end of April 2021. In the meantime, a Member working group had been established to look at the detail of planning meetings and decisions from 7 May onwards, including the Annual Meeting on 27 May 2021.

**RESOLVED:** That the updates from the Director of Public Health and the Monitoring Officer be noted.

**REASON:** To keep the Committee informed of the impact of the pandemic across the city.

## **89. Update on Procurement**

After a short adjournment, Members considered a report from the Section 151 Officer, setting out how the procurement service currently operated and how it had been doing so during the pandemic and detailing improvements made to address the commitment to embed social value into the Council's procurement arrangements. She advised that it would be sensible to await the outcome of the forthcoming Government Green Paper on procurement before updating the Council's Procurement Strategy.

The Section 151 Officer then responded to various questions covering work with suppliers, future integration with other Council organisations, the culture offer, standard contractual requirements, the disability confidence scheme, involving scrutiny in any future procurement review, links to the scope of the ethical disposal review, the YORtender review and contract management guidance.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) The update be noted and contract management guidance be circulated to Members of the Committee for information;
- (ii) Consideration be given to broadening the scope of the work currently taking place on ethical disposal to ensure those Members can constructively engage with reviewing the Council's procurement arrangements as it moves forward in response to the Green Paper.

REASON: To ensure Members are fully updated on existing and planned future procurement arrangements.

*(Councillor Rowley left the meeting at 7.20pm during consideration of the above item)*

## **90. Future of Medigold Element of CYC Approach to Absence Management**

Members considered a report giving an update on the practices which had been put in place following the introduction of the contract with 'Medigold' to help the Council improve management of its sickness recording. It also outlined future options for recording and managing absence as the current contractual arrangements came to an end in September 2021:

- Option 1: Continue with Medigold agreement and negotiate future cost
- Option 2: Go to market for similar supplier and negotiate lowest possible cost
- Option 3: Return to original model around Itrent
- Option 4: Return to original model around Itrent with additional resource in Human Resources

Members asked various questions in relation to the information presented around costs and resource impact, measuring absence levels, links to staff welfare work, estimated future sickness levels and the effect of 'home-working', as well as how staff viewed the 'Medigold' system.

Finally, some consideration was given to Members preferred option, with some preference expressed for either option 1, in light of the understanding that a longer term contract under the existing arrangement was likely not to be sought, or otherwise option 4.

**RESOLVED:** That the report and information provided at this stage be noted with the Executive being asked to consider future arrangements for absence management recording in due course.

**REASON:** To keep the Committee properly informed of any developments in future arrangements for managing absence within the Council.

Councillor J Crawshaw, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 8.32 pm].