
Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	10 January 2022
Present	Councillors Crawshaw (Chair), Hollyer, Musson, Norman, Orrell, Pearson, Rowley and Wann (Substitute)
Apologies	Councillor Baker

In light of the changing circumstances around the Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting was held remotely. Scrutiny Committees are not decision making meetings. Therefore the outcomes recorded in these minutes are **not** subject to approval by the Chief Operating Officer under his emergency delegated powers.

The Chair noted that Cllr Baker was absent and had been substituted by Cllr Wann. He reiterated the statement that he had made at previous meetings and recorded his unease that substitutes had been used, he believed, against the spirit and purpose of the legislation.

47. 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.

48. MINUTES

The Chair requested a correction to the voting record for the recommendations contained within the minutes for the meeting of 08 November 2021.

He also noted that the information requested at the December meeting had been provided.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 08 November 2021 and 13 December 2021 be approved, subject to the correction above, as a correct record to be signed by the Chair at a later date.

49. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

50. PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update and presentation from the Assistant Director of Public Health on the latest figures and information relation to the impact of the Covid virus around the city. She highlighted the following:

- The case numbers in York were following UK trends, with a validated rate of 1800 cases per 100,000. Rates were highest in the 30-50 age and the over 60's rates were twice as high as the previous peak. Most cases were the Omicron variant.
- Over 60's had a good uptake of the vaccine but there had been a low uptake of the vaccine in younger age groups not in a University setting.
- The death rate had not increased in line with the increased number of Covid cases. Care homes with positive cases had not seen an increase in hospital admissions or deaths. Homes with positive cases had been closed to admissions, this had led to fewer hospital discharges.
- The council's contact tracing had a good success rate and overall, York had one of the lowest Covid rates in the region.

The Director of Customer and Communities then gave a brief verbal update regarding staffing and services across the council. She highlighted the following:

- Staff sickness was at 7% of the workforce, with 2-3% being Covid. This equated to 173 staff absent through sickness, 54 of them Covid related. There were also another 20 staff who had tested positive but were well enough to work from home.

- Building and Housing Services had over 10% sickness with approximately one third of the absences due to Covid.
- The council had a business continuity system in place and had been able to ensure staff could safely work from home wherever possible. It had also been possible to redeploy staff to cover essential services and skills and knowledge were being reutilised from the first wave of the pandemic.
- The council had been working with partners across the city, for example with CVS and volunteers to support the vaccination programme.

Both Officers then responded to a range of questions around staff welfare, information on Covid hospitalisations, the call centre operations, lateral flow test availability and hospital staffing levels.

Due to connectivity problems, the Assistant Director of Public Health dropped out of the call for a few minutes. The Chair therefore asked Members to send him written questions which would then be passed to the Officer to respond to.

Members requested more information on the numbers of council staff with long Covid and the support available to them. They also asked for more information regarding the plans to improve recruitment at the council. The Chair suggested to Officers that this should be brought to the next Committee meeting in February.

Resolved:

- i. That the update from the Director of Public Health be noted.
- ii. That the additional information requested by Members be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

Reason:

To keep the Committee informed of the impact of the pandemic across the city and to provide information to Members on matters within the remit of the Committee.

51. WORK PLAN

Members considered the corporate scrutiny work plan covering the next meeting of this Committee and the meetings of the other Scrutiny Committees up until 28 February 2022.

The Chair noted that the Call In item was from 2021 and should not have been on the plan.

Resolved: That the work plan be noted.

Reason:

To ensure that the Committee has a planned programme of work in place and an overview of the other Scrutiny Committees.

Councillor J Crawshaw, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.29 pm].