

Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	6 July 2020
Present	Councillors Crawshaw (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Hunter, Hollyer, Rowley, D Taylor, Pearson and Perrett (substitute for Cllr Barnes)
Officers in Attendance:	Ian Floyd (Interim Head of Paid Service), Sharon Stoltz (Director of Public Health), Amanda Hatton (Corporate Director of Children, Education & Communities Services), Pippa Corner (Assistant Director of Joint Commissioning), Michael Jones (Head of Housing Delivery), Neil Ferris (Corporate Director of Economy & Place), Janie Berry (Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer) and Dawn Steel (Head of Civic and Democratic Services)
Apologies	Councillors Barnes and Musson

Opening Remarks of the Chair

The Chair thanked those Officers who had enabled the Council's first public remote scrutiny meeting to take place and he noted some permanent changes to the Committee's membership, (Cllr Wann had been replaced by Cllr Pearson and Cllr Vassie had been replaced by Cllr Hollyer). He thanked Cllr Wann and Cllr Vassie for their input over the last year and he also thanked the former Scrutiny Officer, Steven Entwhistle, for his support over the years and wished him well in his retirement.

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, prejudicial interest or any discloseable pecuniary interest which they may have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

2. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2020 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chair at a later date.

3. Public Participation

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

Ms Swinburn spoke on agenda item 4, The Council's Response to Covid 19. She expressed her dissatisfaction with the content of the report and the current committee meeting structure. She felt that face to face meetings needed to reconvene as soon as possible.

4. The Council's Response to Covid 19

Members considered a report and annex that highlighted the Council's immediate response to the Covid 19 pandemic, as submitted to and considered by the Executive at its meeting on 7 May 2020.

The Chair expressed the Committee's gratitude to all City of York Council staff for supporting the City during the pandemic and for ensuring essential services continued. He confirmed that at this meeting, Members would receive a number of updates that would reflect upon how each directorate had responded initially to the pandemic.

The Interim Head of Paid Service thanked all staff, key workers, partners, service operators, residents and volunteers who were responding every day to new and changing priorities. He informed Members of the emergency planning measures put in place, to ensure the organisation responded quickly to the crisis and the Council's current financial position, where it was noted that officers would continue to lobby Government for further financial assistance to support the significant pressures.

The Director of Public Health gave a brief overview and confirmed that following the guidance from Public Health England, changes were made to the delivery of some statutory

public health services. She commended all public health staff and partners for their response to the pandemic and for supporting vulnerable groups and numerous organisations, including schools and the NHS.

Officers then answered a number of Members questions and agreed, that due to time constraints, they would supply a written response to any unanswered questions and it was noted that for clarity, the responses would be annexed to the minutes.

A short adjournment took place at 3:04pm and the meeting reconvened at 3:12pm

The Chair welcomed the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities, the Assistant Director of Joint Commissioning, the Head of Housing Delivery and the Corporate Director of Economy and Place to the meeting, where they each supplied Members with a short presentation of their key areas, covering:

- What non-essential work stopped during lockdown.
- What new work had to start.
- What worked well and what could be improved.

Following each presentation, officers answered Members questions and in summary and in noting the work undertaken to date, the Chair invited Committee Members to register their suggested areas for business.

The Chair thanked all officers for their updates.

Resolved:

- (i) That the information received at Annex 1 of the report and from the presentations made at the meeting be considered.
- (ii) That future business for scrutiny be emailed to the Chair.

Reason: To ensure that proper and effective scrutiny was in place in relation to the Councils response to Covid 19.

Councillor J Crawshaw, Chair

[The meeting started at 2.05 pm and finished at 4.16 pm].

Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee

Monday 6 July

2pm

Q. Can an update be provided on the figures linked to the Financial Assistance Scheme and Council Tax Support applications?

A. Within the customer services team, in addition to processing the business support funding, the teams have also been supporting individual residents. Executive agreed to expand the York Financial Assistance Scheme to create a £1.2m support fund for individuals facing hardship. Additionally, the Government's hardship scheme has been delivered for each customer receiving Council Tax Support, giving them a further £150 off their bill. Between 23rd March and 24th April the council has dealt with:

- 431 Council Tax Support applications
- 117 applications for emergency food vouchers
- 75 York Financial Assistance Scheme payments
- 96 Discretionary Housing Payment claims - 20% up on the same period last year.

In terms of the Hardship funding the figures:

- There are 5859 working age customers
- The value of awards was £868K
- There is £89k left allowing for a further 592 awards of £150

In terms of applications:

- 777 Council Tax Support applications
- 297 applications for emergency food vouchers
- 173 York Financial Assistance Scheme payments
- 139 Discretionary Housing Payment claims

Q. How are the partnerships between the academy and local authority schools?

A. The York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB) have been meeting 3 times a week since lock down to plan a city wide response to school issues. The board has representatives from all the city's academy trusts, teaching schools and the research school. Maintained schools are represented by the local authority. The local authority meets daily with the headteachers of maintained schools. Most recently they have been focusing on planning for September re opening and have considered this as phase groups (i.e. primary and secondary). There has been very strong sharing across the school community and there has also been weekly input from public health and children's social care.

Q. How are we supporting the voluntary community?

A. We are working with the voluntary sector via CVS to ensure they are at the heart of our community recovery work and to promote fund-raising efforts for small charities. This includes working with them on initiatives such as support to holiday hunger. We are also working to ensure we are clear on our commissioning arrangements for our early help services and working with the voluntary sector on what they are able to do to support preventative work in the city.

We are supporting the sector to access government financial support where possible.

Q. How are we ensuring that the improvement planning measures are maintained?

Throughout lockdown and now in recovery the Improvement Board has continued to meet monthly. This is chaired by the Corporate Director of Children Education and Communities and has membership from the Department for Education and the Local Government Association to provide external challenge and the lead member and Interim Head of Paid Service are members of the Board. We have also commissioned a peer review of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in September.