

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.