

Meeting	Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee
Date	12 June 2018
Present	Councillors D Taylor (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Brooks, Crawshaw, Jackson, Rawlings and Wells
In Attendance	Cllr K Myers, Executive Member for Education, Children & Young People

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### **1. Declarations of Interest**

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

### **2. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 22 May 2018 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair subject to adding Cllr Jackson as sending apologies and in point 50 it be noted, in the eighth bullet point, that tougher assessments for schools were putting them under pressure meaning some schools were narrowing the curriculum *in several subjects including RE*.

### **3. Public Participation**

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

### **4. Attendance of Executive Member for Education, Children & Young People - Priorities & Challenges for 2018/19**

The Executive Member for Education, Children & Young People was in attendance to provide an update on his priorities and challenges for the 2018-19 municipal year.

A list of the Executive Members key priority areas was distributed at the meeting and a copy attached to the online agenda.

The Executive Member addressed the mental health issues facing children and young people and highlighted the importance of early intervention. He felt this area of concern could be a potential topic to consider for scrutiny review.

Members were given the opportunity to view a booklet that had been created by York's Children in Care Council called 'You Are Not Alone'. It highlighted some of the issues faced by young people in care, with a particular focus on mental health.

In answer to Members questions the Executive Member confirmed:

- The provision of services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) was good and that current arrangements were being enhanced to ensure education, health and care needs would be met in York.
- Officers would continue to work in partnership with Local Authority maintained schools and would support them in offering a more diverse, balanced and flexible curriculum.
- The centre for excellence project was still ongoing and should meet the agreed completion dates.

Members thanked the Executive Member for his update and they agreed to consider his suggested scrutiny topic.

Resolved: That the update from the Executive Member on his portfolio areas be received and noted.

Reason: To update the committee on the challenges and priorities within the Executive Members portfolio area.

## **5. York Theatre Royal Bi-annual Update**

Members considered a report that informed them of the progress and performance of York Theatre Royal.

The new Executive Director (CEO) of York Citizens Theatre Trust was in attendance to provide an update. He discussed

their future direction and explained how the theatre was building resilience and improving revenue streams, which included using the newly refurbished De Grey Rooms as a wedding venue.

Members noted that York Theatre Royal provided a drama group called, 'Access All Areas' where children and young people with mental health issues could explore all elements of theatre and drama in a safe and supportive environment.

The Executive Director confirmed they would be growing and diversifying their audiences and would continue to interact with various groups and forums around the city to ensure local communities had a voice in the development of the theatre.

In answer to Members questions the Executive Director confirmed:

- Advocacy work with the Arts Council was taking place to reverse negative perceptions of the organisation.
- Ticket sales had reduced inline with national decline and staff would be working to improve revenue.
- A garden designer had been commissioned to create a patio/garden space between the 1967 Patrick Gwynne foyer and De Grey House which may include space for cycle parking.
- York Theatre Royal was a national leader in outreach work and offered one of the highest functioning youth theatre groups.
- A copy of their business plan, when finalised, could be distributed to Committee Members

Members thanked the Executive Director for his update and it was noted that their long term plan was to find a permanent location in the city for rehearsal/creation space.

Resolved: That the report and Members comments on progress be noted.

Reason: To fulfil the council's role as a funding body.

## **6. York CVS Annual Activity Report 2017/18**

Members considered a report from York CVS that provided an update on their activity during 2017/18.

The Assistant Director of Communities & Equalities informed Members that to further develop a relationship with York CVS, this committee would now receive a bi-annual report.

The Chief Executive of York CVS was in attendance to give an overview of their services and she discussed how they:

- Supported the sector to survive and thrive,
- Represented the sector and provided a voice,
- Delivered services with a social impact and
- Sustained organisational strength.

She highlighted the vast range of services they had offered over the last year, including their multi-faceted roles. Members noted the workshops and training sessions York CVS had designed and delivered to build strength and resilience.

Members were made aware of their recent work which included hosting the first Regional Social Prescribing Networking event and their involvement in the successful Ways to Wellbeing project, which resulted in significantly reducing the use of GP time for non-medical issues by 29.7%.

It was noted that York CVS would be consulting with partners to develop a new strategy and discussions took place regarding adaptability levels, early intervention, barriers within the sector and support for communities. Members indicated they could help with projects such as Growing Green Spaces due to their involvement with volunteering groups.

The Corporate Director of Children, Education & Communities informed Members that the Chief Executive of York CVS was resigning and he thanked her for the exceptional work she had delivered.

Members thanked officers for their update and expressed their appreciation to the Chief Executive.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the committee on the activity of York CVS.

## **7. School Meals Scrutiny Review**

Members considered a report that presented a final update on the impact on schools in York following the introduction of universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) in September 2014.

The Head of School Services was in attendance to provide the update and he confirmed that the number of school meal catering providers across York schools and the number of schools bringing their school meals catering services in house had grown over the last 4 years. He stated that the quality of food was still high and caterers were reducing sugar and salt in meals.

Members noted that due to the withdrawal of the central school meals contract, it had become more difficult to monitor the uptake of school meals. The only data available to the Local Authority (LA) was information collected and collated on the school census data, meaning comparisons could only take place on a yearly basis.

Officers confirmed the take-up across the primary schools of UIFSM had remained consistent at round 78-79% since its introduction in 2014 and that schools continued to encourage take-up in key stage 2, which had seen a small increase of 3%-5% year on year.

Discussions took place around pupil premium take up, the advantages the funding had on schools and what the LA could do to further support this. Officers confirmed that schools continued to encourage those eligible to apply in KS1 and KS2 and the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities informed the committee that the Health and Wellbeing Board would be considering obesity and they could include pupil premium as part of the children and young people's focus.

Catering costs were discussed and officers confirmed they continued to support schools and academy trusts in the procurement process and contract management.

Members thanked officers for the update.

Resolved: That the report be noted

Reason: To provide an update on take-up and impact of UIFSM across York Primary schools.

## **8. Work Plan 2018/19**

Members considered the committee's work plan for the 2018-19 municipal year.

Following discussion it was agreed that Cllr Crawshaw would prepare a scrutiny topic proposal for the committee to consider on the delivery and accessibility of mental health services.

Members agreed to be involved in the development of the revised Tourism Strategy and requested this be added to the work plan at the appropriate time.

The Chair took this opportunity to inform the committee that the Scrutiny Officer had taken up a new post at North Yorkshire County Council. Members thanked the Scrutiny Officer for all her help and support over the years and wished her well in her new post.

Resolved: That the work plan be approved subject to the above amendments/additions.

Reason: To keep the committee's work plan updated

Cllr D Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.45 pm].