

---

Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	5 October 2020
Present	Councillors Crawshaw (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Hunter, Hollyer, Rowley, Musson, Pearson, Mason, and Kilbane (Substitute for Councillor Barnes)
Apologies	Councillor Barnes

---

## 26. 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 discloseable pecuniary interests they may have in respect of business on the agenda.

Cllr Mason declared a pecuniary interest as his partner worked at the University of York as a Security Officer and he worked as the Health Services Manager at St Peters School.

Cllr Rowley declared a prejudicial interest as a school governor at both St Aelred's RC Primary School and Archbishop Holgate CE Academy.

Cllr Crawshaw declared a prejudicial interest as a school governor at Governor at Scarcroft Primary School.

## 27. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held at 2:00pm on 7 September 2020 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair at a later date, subject to the following amendments:

- i. That Cllr Kilbane be removed from the list of apologies as he was not required to attend the meeting.
- ii. That minute 21. be amended to note that the Chair of the Committee was disappointed at the disproportionate number of Liberal Democrats now on the Committee, not that there would be no Green

members on the Committee, now that Cllr Taylor was an independent member.

## **28. Public Participation**

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

## **29. Health Update**

The Director of Public Health gave an update on COVID-19 cases in York noting the rise in both cases and the rate of infection. She also provided updates on cases in care homes, schools, and universities, as well as, the increased activity in hospitals. She gave an update on test and trace noting that the data available showed that most transmissions were through social contact and that there had been no outbreaks in work places or hospitality settings in York.

Members discussed the access to data and whether York should expect greater restrictions or a 'local lockdown' based on the available data. It was noted that under previous social distancing framework's York could have expected further restrictions, however, Government were still creating a new tier system which was expected to have new thresholds to enter a new tier. Questions were also raised regarding travel between 'locked down' and 'non-locked down' areas, it was noted that while people could travel from areas with higher rates of infection to areas with lower rates of infection, there was no public health powers that could limit travel.

Resolved:

- i. Members to consider what COVID-19 data they would wish to have presented at the next meeting of the Committee.
- ii. Public Health to give a full presentation on COVID-19 data alongside the public health update.
- iii. Public Health update was noted.

Reason: To ensure that Members were aware of the current situation in York relating to Covid-19.

### **30. Schools Update**

The Committee received an update on York's schools, it was noted that schools had remained open throughout the pandemic and that attendance had been above the national average. Cases in schools were also noted, highlighting that while there had been cases no schools had had to be closed to deal with these. Members noted a thanks to school staff for their work throughout the pandemic.

Members enquired about how schools were finding the national test and trace system and it was noted that local system had had a positive effect on schools. Staff in a vulnerable or at risk category at schools were enquired about and officers confirmed that schools were taking each staff member as an individual case and assessing what is needed to ensure staff members are safe.

Flu vaccinations in schools were discussed and it was noted that school staff that were eligible would have access through the NHS and school staff employed through City of York Council will have access to the councils vaccination system. School staff employed by academies will be reliant on each academy to establish a vaccination scheme.

The walk to and from school was also discussed in relation to students using retail areas and whether this could put students and non-students at risk of catching COVID-19. It was noted that messages had been given to parents and schools to encourage large groups of students not meeting and congregating at shops after school, however, as it is not a public nuisance there is no enforcement that could be considered to enforce students to go directly home after the school day.

Resolved:

- i. The update was noted.

Reason: To ensure the Committee is kept updated regarding schools during COVID-19.

The Committee adjourned for a short break between the times of 3:10pm to 3:17pm.

### 31. **Update on Return of Universities**

The Committee were joined by officers and Professor Charlie Jeffery the Vice Chancellor of York University.

It was outlined that York's higher education sector had planned for the full return of students and had carried out this planning by working with partners including City of York Council and York's Public Health officials. It was noted that a sub group of the Outbreak Management Board had been set up to look at higher education and this group had undertaken various scenario planning in preparation.

The work undertaken to prepare was noted including actions having been taken such as the move of a lot of fresher's week online, a specific bus service for the University had been agreed with Frist and students had been advised to use this service and no other buses. It was also noted that socially distanced events had been set up on campus to lessen the number of students using bars in the city centre. Support provided to students having to isolate was also noted.

Access to testing was discussed for students and staff and it was noted that home kits had been acquired for York's institutions and a walk in testing centre had been set up on the University of York's campus, discussion took place regarding the location in relation to St John's University and while it was agreed as not being ideal the site was within a 35 minute walk which was better than the access to the drive in centre at Poppleton Bar. Members enquired about the use of the University Labs for testing and it was highlighted that work had been undertaken with regional partners and the NHS around this and it was incumbent on logistical organisation and Central Government support that would allow the University to deliver some testing for COVID-19.

International students were discussed and it was highlighted that all international students would have to undertake 2 weeks of self-isolation and were collected from airports in chartered transport, once, they would also receive 2 weeks of free accommodation alongside support to be able to isolate.

Online teaching was considered and how York's higher education institutions had adapted to the challenges of teaching either virtually or in a mixed environment. Members enquired as

to whether more tutors and lecturers had been hired to facilitate online teaching, whether there were more opportunities for online learning if students didn't travel to York, and whether fees were still justified with the changes to how teaching had changed. It was confirmed that the Universities had not expanded their recruitment but had planned and prepared since the start of the pandemic and had worked closely with teaching unions to be able to start the academic year. Changes to fees were not advised by Professor Jeffery due to the changes as University fees were not set by contact teaching time. It was also noted that additional access to teaching online from students homes had been made available for those still unable to travel to York, however, the University did intend for students not on a distance learning course to be able to learn from York once any transport issues were resolved.

Resolved:

- i. The update was noted.
- ii. That members of the Committee consider any KPI information they would wish to be presented regarding COVID-19 at future meetings.

Reason: To ensure that Members were aware of the current situation relating to Covid-19 and York's higher education sector.

Councillor J Crawshaw, Chair

[The meeting started at 2.04 pm and finished at 4.01 pm].