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Meeting	Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	6 July 2021
Present	Councillors Webb (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Fenton, Fitzpatrick, Heaton, Barker and Orrell
Apologies	Councillor Baker (Chair)

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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.

Cllr Webb declared a personal non prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 4, YSAB Education Recovery, in that he was a teacher.

During discussion of Agenda Item 4, YSAB Education Recovery, Cllr Fitzpatrick declared a personal non prejudicial interest in that she was a teacher, an ex-advisor and Ofsted Inspector.

## 2. **Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 April 2021 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair at a later date.

[5:34pm Cllr Barker joined the meeting]

The Chair noted that this Committee's draft work plan for the 21/22 municipal year had been considered by the Customer and Corporate Services and Scrutiny Management Committee and they had requested that this Committee also considered the £9m+ overspend in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and staff absence/sickness rates within the directorate. It was agreed that the home to school transport report, that was due for consideration at the September meeting, be broadened to include the overspend in SEND and that the

absence/sickness rates within the directorate be added to the unassigned list for consideration later in the municipal year.

It was agreed that an updated work plan would be emailed to Members.

### **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. YSAB Education Recovery**

Members considered a presentation that updated them on York's education recovery.

The Chief Executive of the Hope Learning Trust was in attendance to provide an update. During her presentation, the Chief Executive informed Members that the Education Futures Group, made up of Head teachers from primary, secondary and special phases, local authority representatives and Multi-Academy Trust representatives, would:

- develop a city-wide education plan;
- support schools and families to 'catch-up', following any lost learning;
- ensure the education offer for the future met children's individual needs;
- have an integrated approach, with services working together.

The Chief Executive highlighted the importance of working together to ensure the right approach and resources were in place to ensure:

- high quality teaching for all;
- targeted academic support;
- wider strategies to support, early years, gaps in learning, enrichment, wellbeing and extending the 'school experience'.

It was also noted that:

- A survey had been launched across the city to all children, school staff, parents and carers asking for their views.
- The themes and strategies that were starting to develop included a common language approach for teaching and learning, additional tutoring and targeted interventions,

specific continuing professional development (CPD) training programmes for staff, speech and language development in early years settings and reading and writing developments.

- The gaps within special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) had become bigger, locally and nationally and the Trust would be working to ensure the right strategies would be implemented for those children.

Members questions were answered by the Chief Executive and the Assistant Director of Education and Skills relating to targeted academic support, good quality teaching, those not in education, employment or training (NEET), the wider strategies, government announcements/funding, the working together approach and youth mental health, it was noted that:

- Targeted academic support was dependant on the individual and schools would be considering their capacity to deliver more specific interventions to support individuals/groups.
- High quality teaching should be set as standard and made available for all students, particularly those that required it most.
- Children had missed their friends and social activities but following government announcements, schools would hopefully be running as normal from September and would work with cultural partners and community groups across the city to develop in school enrichment programmes.
- The government funding allocation was based on 60% of the number of children that were pupil premium and there was a fixed fee for mainstream schools. The funding allocation did not have to be spent on the pupil that attracted pupil premium, it was for the school to decide the best fit around evidence based targeted interventions.
- A common city language approach across all schools would be developed to support teaching and teaching strategies.
- Schools must ensure their messaging around interventions was correct, to promote a culture of achievement and minimise any potential stigma.

The Chief Executive and her staff were thanked for their continued support and work throughout an incredibly challenging year.

Resolved: That the update be noted and that the outcomes of the survey be emailed to Members.

Reason: To keep Members updated on the recovery plans.

[An adjournment took place between 6:12pm and 6:20pm]

## **5. York Learning Annual Report**

Members considered a report that presented the end of the academic year performance and data for York Learning.

The Head of York Learning, the Chair of the York Learning Improvement Board and the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities were in attendance to present the report and answer any questions raised.

The Head highlighted the key points in her report and Members were informed that:

- In July 2019, to strengthen the scrutiny arrangements, a Stakeholder Governance Board was established, subsequently named the York Learning Improvement Board.
- The Improvement Board first met in October 2020, they meet four to five times a year and the members (York Learning Governors) of the Board were drawn from a variety of backgrounds.
- The service had performed well against the measures set out in the strategic plan for 20/21 and the service's performance in supporting 16 to 18 year old learners and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) students was a challenging financial model.
- Whilst the strong online curriculum enabled engagement from all types of learners, including the most disadvantaged, going fully online had made new engagement opportunities with the most disengaged incredibly difficult, leading to lower recruitment levels mainly within entry and lower level skills.
- Employers had not struggled to fill vacancies over the last year and due to the Covid restrictions a jobs fair did not take place. To support residents, officers had co-ordinated the Community Learning Partnership to provide a 'Learning in York' week to support those unemployed to develop their employability skills.

- Apprenticeship programmes were no longer in minimum standards.

During discussion of the item and in answer to Members questions, it was noted that:

- The input and challenge over the last year from the York Learning Improvement Board had been incredibly helpful, which had resulted in adapting the strategic plan and the self-assessment report.
- The number of refugee learners had lowered slightly but families continued to progress their English skills and the family learning programme courses would continue.
- York Learning worked with a range of learners and offered various courses and apprenticeship programmes. They also offered a high needs special educational programme for 16 to 24 year olds, various essential skills (English, Maths, IT) courses for the 19+ age group, including wider adults and community learning programmes.
- A blended model would be offered moving forward and officers were hoping to hold a jobs fair later this year.
- Officers worked robustly with and moderated the different subcontracting organisations.
- Partners across the city were working together to consider the future need models across the curriculum.
- The impact of Covid had brought the need for the service to have its own venue into ever sharper relief and officers continued to consider potential options. Members were invited to visit the learning environment at the roots programme base.

Members were impressed by the wide range of services on offer including the NSPCC Look, Say, Sing, Play initiative, support for those in NEETs, the Early Talk for York offer, the refugee resettlement offer and the accommodation asylum seeker programme, and the Head of York Learning and her staff were commended for their work.

Resolved: That the performance of York Learning be noted and that an update on digital inclusion and post Covid recovery be included in the next annual report.

Reason: To help monitor the service and guide managers and ensure robust and accountable governance arrangements.

## 6. **Holiday Activities And Food (HAF) Programme 2021**

Members consider a report that highlighted the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme 2021 and provided an overview of pilot delivery during Easter as well as the plans for future delivery during the summer and Christmas holiday periods.

The Head of Early Years and Childcare Service, the Community & Partnerships Officer and Assistant Director of Education and Skills were in attendance to provide the update and answer any questions raised.

The Head of Early Years stated that:

- In November 2020, the government announced that the HAF programme would be expanded across the whole of England in 2021. The programme would be aimed at children aged 5-16 who were on free school meals so they could be supported to eat healthy and take part in enriching activities to support their wellbeing.
- York had been allocated £383,000, which was based on the January 2021 free school meal head count.
- The government had given flexibility to local authorities to treat the Easter holidays as a pilot of activities to inform a fuller delivery later in the year. A small range of Covid safe activities were offered in the Westfield and Clifton areas in line with current lockdown guidelines and 62 children engaged.
- Officers had engaged with the regional HAF network to understand good practice and a local steering group had been set up to support the coordination of a local programme and to work with a wide range of partners to achieve implementation.
- The communications team would promote the menu of activities and links would be made available on City of York Council ([www.york.gov.uk](http://www.york.gov.uk)) and YorOk ([www.yor-ok.org.uk](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk)) websites.
- Referral processes were robust and came via schools to ensure children were identified and encouraged to participate.
- York had a rich and diverse provision of community partners and organisations and over 20 providers had been commissioned to deliver the HAF programme during the summer holidays for eligible children.

- Conversations were taking place with York's special schools to consider if some activities for children with more complex needs could be offered.

During discussion of the item and in answer to Members questions, it was noted that:

- It was more challenging to engage older children, particularly during the summer months and officers recognised that the engagement process for this age group would require a different approach to the primary provision. Officers would draw on the experience of already existing providers who were working with secondary aged children.
- The provision of meals during activities was an important aspect of the programme and it had been challenging to find suppliers that met the national school food standards, as well as conform with the allergen requirements.
- A range of providers and partners in the city had engaged in developing ideas on how to offer provision now and in the future, with a mapping exercise currently taking place to understand any gaps across the city.
- The HEF programme would be provided across 4 weeks of the summer holidays.

Officers were thanked for their report and for the impressive work achieved in such a short space of time.

Resolved: That the report be noted and an update be provided to the Committee at a future meeting.

Reason: To keep Members updated.

Cllr Webb, Vice-Chair, in the Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30pm and finished at 7.36pm].