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Meeting	Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	4 January 2022
Present	Councillors Barker, Daubeney (Chair), Fenton, Fitzpatrick, Heaton and Webb (Vice-Chair)
In Attendance	Councillors Cuthbertson (Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education) and Smalley (Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities)
Apologies	Councillor Baker

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In light of the changing circumstances around the Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting was held remotely. Scrutiny Committees are not decision making meetings. Therefore the outcomes recorded in these minutes are **not** subject to approval by the Chief Operating Officer under his emergency delegated powers.

## **20. 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.

## **21. Minutes**

Cllr Webb noted that Members had not been provided with the data regarding the 12 month spend on agency staff requested at the meeting on 27 September 2021. He also noted a typographical error in the minutes of 06 October 2021, in that in minute number seventeen, fourth paragraph, second bullet point it should have read 'complexity' rather than 'complicity'.

Resolved:

- i. That the typographical error be corrected and a further request for the data be made.
- ii. That the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 27 September 2021 and 06 October 2021 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair at a later date.

## **22. Public Participation**

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

## **23. Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme 2021 Update**

Members considered a report that updated them on the delivery of the new Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme in 2021 and the future delivery plans in 2022.

The Head of Education Support Services and the Community and Partnerships Officer were in attendance to present the report and answer questions from Members. They noted the following:

- Where possible, the holiday activity should include a hot meal. Providing a hot meal had proved difficult, especially for smaller activity providers. Food provision had been mainly in the form of packed lunches and hampers for families.
- Covid had made delivery of the programme difficult, particularly at Christmas with the Omicron variant. Families had tended to be more insular over the Christmas period.
- During the summer approximately 20% of eligible families benefitted from the scheme, with 25% benefitting at Christmas. This contrasts with approximately 10% in other local areas.

Officers responded to a variety of questions from Members covering a range of topics that included the differences in take up between the summer and Christmas provision, the level of take up compared to the funding available and the feedback received from families. They noted the following:

- The budget for HAF hot meals was £2.63 per head, this had been set on the basis that school canteens was to have been providing the meals. Community kitchens and smaller providers had not been able to match that budget requirement and could not be expected to do so. The food provision must align with school food standards.
- It had been difficult to find outreach projects for older children.
- Food vouchers had not been provided during HAF weeks.

At this point in the meeting the Chair noted that the Director of Children's Services had confirmed to him via email that the health checks for two year olds were reviewed by the Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny committee.

The Director of Customer and Communities then drew Members' attention to the Executive Members' request for the committee to consider the effectiveness of the food voucher scheme for children receiving free school meals. This provision had been extended to February half term 2022.

She gave some background information to the scheme and there followed a brief discussion as to the best way to proceed. Cllrs Daubeney, Fenton and Fitzpatrick agreed to form a task group and requested that the Director of Customer and Communities provide the details of Officers who would assist with the task.

Resolved:

- i. That the report be noted.
- ii. That a Task Group be formed to consider the effectiveness, impact and funding of the voucher scheme alongside other grassroots community-based provision and other schemes to address the impact of food poverty.

Reason: To ensure that the committee were kept up to date with the new HAF programme and to provide detailed scrutiny of the school holiday food provision voucher scheme.

## 24. **Finance Second Quarter Monitoring Report - Children's Services**

The committee considered a report that analysed the latest performance for 2021/22 and forecasted the financial outturn position by reference to the Children's Services plans and budgets falling under the responsibility of the Children's Services elements of this committee's responsibilities.

The Head of Finance: Adults, Children & Education presented the report and referred to the summary of the service plan variations shown in table 1. He highlighted the forecasted overspend in Children's Specialist Services which was primarily due to the increase in the number of children in care and the associated costs of placements and staffing.

The Director of Children's Services and the Head of Finance then responded to a number of questions from Members covering the impact of Covid, out of city placements, spending trends, the local care system and staffing. They noted the following:

- The Q3 monitor would provide more detailed information regarding costs.
- 283 children were in care at the time of the meeting.
- The Children Resource Panel started in December and was chaired by the Director of Children's Services. It aimed to make highly scrutinised, rapid response decisions to ensure that the right children were in care, working with early help and the targeted intervention service. It also aimed to make better use of the legal system and manage risk better within the community. Decisions regarding children in permanent care were also referred to the Panel.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the committee on the latest financial position for 2021/22.

## **25. Early Help via CYC Local Area Teams**

The Head of Service Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Assessment and Targeted Intervention presented a report which provided an overview of 'Early Help' within the city and the Child and Family Targeted Intervention Service.

The Officer, together with the Director of Children's Services responded to questions from Members covering the effectiveness of the new early intervention arrangements, the co-design of family hubs and the timescales for implementation, training and support. They noted that:

- A 'team around a child' approach was used which included all partners such as schools, health and housing and created a co-ordinated plan.
- Family hubs were 12 months from being implemented.
- Current staffing levels had the capacity to support the team around the child. Training was provided by partners.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To keep the committee updated.

[Cllr Smalley left the meeting during the discussion of this item.]

[Meeting adjourned 19:13 to 19:25]

## **26. Community Hubs Scrutiny Review - Interim Report**

Cllr Webb presented a paper that updated the committee on the progress of the scrutiny review, on behalf of the Community Hub review group members (Cllrs Webb, Fenton & Fitzpatrick). He noted that it had been difficult to secure resources to undertake the review and highlighted the report in appendix 1 on Community Hubs, which had been written by an intern. Cllr Webb noted that the report had been marked as draft to highlight that it had been written by a politician, rather than an Officer.

In response to questions, the review group proposed that the next stage would be to investigate hubs in other areas and host an online meeting to share experience and best practice. This would assist in informing the Community Hub strategy.

Cllr Webb requested additional scrutiny resources so that the report could be finalised.

Resolved:

- i. That the report be noted.
- ii. That the review group meet with other local areas and providers.
- iii. That the review group investigate securing resources to finalise the report.

Reason: To ensure the committee were kept up to date with the progress of the task group.

## **27. Work Plan**

Members considered the committee's work plan for the current municipal year. It was noted that there was an error on the work plan; the correct date for the meeting in April was 13/04/22.

[Cllr Cuthbertson left the meeting during discussion of the item.]

Following discussions, it was:

Resolved:

- i. That an update from Make It York regarding cultural activities be received on 13 April 2022.
- ii. That the York Learning annual update report be moved to the first committee meeting in the next municipal year.
- iii. That the annual update from York Explore and GLL Leisure be provided at the first committee meeting in the next municipal year.

Reason: To keep the work plan updated.

Cllr S Daubeney, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.31 pm and finished at 7.48 pm].