
Meeting	Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee
Date	27 November 2019
Present	Councillors D Taylor (Chair), Webb (Vice-Chair), Daubeney, Fenton, Fitzpatrick, Heaton and Hollyer

35. 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 Daubeney declared a personal non prejudicial interest in agenda item 4, Cultural Entitlement for Young People, in that he was a trustee on the York Museums Trust and an observer on the York Theatre Royal Trust.

36. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 October 2019 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair.

37. Public Participation

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

38. Cultural Entitlement for Young People

Members received an update on the background and context of REACH (Reconnecting Education, the Arts, Creativity and Heritage), York's Cultural Education Partnership.

The Chair of REACH was in attendance to provide an update and he highlighted their vision and objectives to provide every child and young person in York, wherever they start in life, with

an entitlement to outstanding cultural and arts education. The plan would involve identifying what every child born and living in the City of York should experience creatively before they were five, before they left primary school and before they left secondary school. The aim was to provide every child and young person in York with access to a creative entitlement with opportunities to sing, dance, play, write, create, perform and visit places where they can see and touch the culture and heritage of York.

The plan would involve schools, colleges, various voluntary and community organisations and other partners where REACH would provide a unique forum for networking and for sharing intelligence, practice and resources.

Members noted the research and evidence listed in the report and that a cultural education was critical to the health, wellbeing and success of children, to the strength of communities and to economic progress locally and nationally.

Members thanked the Chair for his update and they supported the vision, objectives and aims of REACH and appreciated the importance of working with teachers, schools and communities to create a powerful offer and they welcomed an update at a future meeting.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report and presentation be noted.
- (ii) That a letter of commendation for the work being carried out be drafted and sent to the Chair of REACH.

Reason: To consider how the Council might assist in the work to develop a cultural entitlement for young people.

39. Improving the Outcomes of Disadvantaged Pupils

Members considered a report that updated them on improving progress and attainment outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in York.

The Head of Primary School Effectiveness and Achievement gave an update and confirmed that the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and young people in York were slowly

improving but were still significantly below those of their peers. It was noted that the gap began in the early years and was characterised by poor outcomes in language and communication, and they highlighted York's promise to disadvantaged pupils and young people to improve the provision.

Members noted that the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils in York varied by school and Officers highlighted the end of year statistics across all key stages and confirmed the actions to be taken to improve outcomes which included:

- Developing a clear strategy to early years provision in the area through learning gained from the Early Talk for York project.
- Upskilling the workforce to identify and respond to speech, communication and language needs.
- Identifying and disseminating evidence based approaches around communication of key messages to the community which supported improvements in the home learning environment.

The Officer explained that a Social Mobility Steering Group had been established to tackle underachievement and improve life chances for disadvantaged children and young people. Members noted that two new initiatives, Write Time and Reading for Real, had been implemented in over 32 schools, helping over 2000 pupils to improve reading and writing.

The Social Mobility Project Manager was in attendance to discuss the Early Talk for York project which aimed to improve the current attainment in communication and language strands of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Members noted that based on strong evidence the communication and language outcomes at age five were one of the most important predictors of future life chances. The project was a collaboration between three primary schools, to the west of the city and partners across City of York Council, early years settings and early years health practitioners and aimed to build capacity in the local area to support children and their families 0-5.

Members noted the key strands of work, which included, the deployment of a Speech and Language Therapist to work specifically in the project area, specialist training for early years practitioners, focused work from the family learning team and an

online and physical marketing campaign to raise awareness of early childhood development.

Members also noted the progress made to date and welcomed further improvements in this area and in answer to their questions, it was confirmed that:

- The Speech and Language Therapist would lead on the level 4 ELKLAN training planned to start in the spring term and she had already made visits to all settings involved in the project.
- Disadvantaged pupils progress in schools was targeted and monitored with interventions put in place where needed.
- Officers were working with settings and schools within the highest deprivation areas, to share good practice and specifically target closing the word gap to support progress in education outcomes.
- The project would be evaluated by Huntington Research School and local universities to enable Officers to develop the project and be more focussed in their offer.
- Funding was a challenge but the remuneration offered by various stakeholders, including School Forum and the Shine Trust, would allow the project to expand.
- Preschool settings and independent childminders had been contacted and were involved in the project.

Officers confirmed the project was supported by the School Forum and head teachers and various other professionals including midwives and community learning champions, who all saw the value of the project and would help raise awareness to parents and families to ensure the support started early.

The Chair thanked Officers for their report and it was noted that Ward Councillors could also support the project and grow awareness and connections within their wards.

Resolved:

- (i) That the work being done by the York Schools and Academies Board be supported and the progress of the social mobility strategic plan be noted.
- (ii) That an update be received at a future meeting.

Reason: For Members to scrutinise the progress of the social mobility strategic plan.

40. Feasibility Report - Young People's Mental Wellbeing in York

Members considered a report that informed them about a topic request submitted by the Vice Chair of this Committee. The topic request sought to understand and assess the factors contributing to mental health and wellbeing for young people and the systems in place in York.

The Scrutiny Officer highlighted the background to this topic and Members noted that the needs and impact of mental health provision for children and young people was highly complex. Many different partners worked together at a strategic and operational level to support young people's mental health and wellbeing in York and he suggested that should Members decide to take this topic forward, a representative from the York Youth Council and York Mind could be invited to take part in the review.

An Officer from the Clinical Commissioning Group was in attendance to provide an understanding to Members regarding young people's mental health and wellbeing in York and she explained how children from disadvantaged backgrounds were more likely to come into contact with specialist services. She confirmed they were working to implement commissioning plans set out by NHS England for improving and expanding mental health care, by offering a whole pathway of responses and different support or specialist mental health services, at different levels.

Members noted the Youth Council's responses to the topic request and that they would welcome more youth clubs/centres to help develop physical friendships, eliminate isolation and have the chance to rectify a 'bad day'.

Following further discussion around the topic request including the current state of youth mental health and wellbeing in York, self-harm and hospital admissions, Members thanked the Scrutiny Officer for his detailed report and agreed to form a Task Group comprising of Cllrs Taylor, Webb and Daubeney.

It was agreed that the Scrutiny Officer would initially prepare a scoping report, using the following questions as a basis for the Task Group to further investigate:

- How well was the system working together, managed, analysed and how were statistics recorded and understood?
- Are schools confident to intervene early in a case with the required external support and internal capacity without recourse to specialist provision
- Is there a gap in parenting support and engaging hard to reach families?
- Are services able to distinguish between behavioural issues presenting as mental health and wellbeing issues?
- How were services working together to respond appropriately to social communication difficulties that may present as autistic traits?
- What do we provide in the city for children and young people to develop friendships outside of a school environment?

Resolved: (i) That Councillors Daubeney, Taylor and Webb form the Task Group.

(ii) That a scoping report be prepared by the Scrutiny Officer, using the questions above as a basis for the Task Group to further investigate and agree a remit.

(ii) That a representative from York Youth Council and York Mind be invited to take part in the review.

Reason: To comply with scrutiny policy and procedures

41. Scoping Report on Corporate Review of Poverty in York

Members considered a report that requested they undertake a review into elements of poverty in the city which fell within this Committee's remit, as part of a corporate review of poverty in York.

The Scrutiny Officer was in attendance to present the report. He highlighted the background to the request, where it was noted that at Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee's (CSMC) November 2019 meeting, they agreed that

rather than individual scrutiny committees independently picking up individual aspects of poverty, it made sense to look at poverty as a whole, with each scrutiny committee focusing on a separate element of poverty to feed into a final corporate report to be drafted by CSMC.

Members were made aware that point 14 within the report should state that the delivery of affordable homes on new developments was within the portfolio of Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee and not this Committee's remit.

Members discussed the life and journey of a child in poverty including links to education, cultural entitlement, life chances for children and they agreed that this was a vast remit that required careful consideration and better understanding before deciding which aspects to deep dive.

Members thanked the Scrutiny Officer for his report and after further detailed discussion, it was:

Resolved: That, to enable a remit to be considered and agreed all Committee Members be invited to attend an informal meeting that will provide them with a better understanding of the life and journey of a child in poverty.

Reason: To provide a corporate, cross-party response to poverty in the city.

42. Work Plan

The Committee considered its draft work plan for the municipal year 2019/20.

Following discussion, Members agreed to update the work plan with the following:

Wednesday 18 December 2019

- Skills Plan update to be deferred to later in 2020.
- Subject to Officer availability, receive two scoping reports regarding the agreed scrutiny reviews on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and child poverty.

Tuesday 25 March 2020

- Receive a report highlighting Foster Carer remuneration and incentivisation.

The Chair thanked the Scrutiny Officer for all of his work and support to the Committee and Members wished him well in his 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 5.00 pm and finished at 7.50 pm].