
Cabinet

6th November 2012

Report of the Council Leader

Responding to the final report of York Fairness Commission:

A better York for everyone

Summary

1. This report contains the proposed response of CYC to the Fairness Commission's final report published on 27th September 2012: *A better York for everyone* (Annex A). The report proposes 10 Fairness Principles, makes 7 headline recommendations and commends more than 100 *Ideas for Action* (Annex B) to be assessed and actioned.
2. Cabinet is asked to approve the proposed response to each of the Headline Recommendations noting how they contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan priorities.
3. Cabinet is also asked to approve the proposals for the ongoing ownership and monitoring of the Fairness Principles and Recommendations.
4. Any financial implications of recommendations which are proposed for implementation action in 2013/2014 will be formally proposed for Cabinet decision in the forthcoming 2013/14 Capital and Revenue Budget Reports.

Background

5. York is currently considered one of the most fair and equitable cities in the UK (ranked 6th out of 64 cities by the Centre for Cities Outlook 2012). However the Council is also aware that a significant number of people across the city live in challenging financial circumstances: 10,200 households are workless; 12,210 people are dependent on benefits; more than 4,500 York children are living in poverty and roughly 13,000 residents live in the 20% most deprived areas in the country. Impending changes to welfare benefits and ongoing

reductions in public spending are likely to increase this number and make households more vulnerable to income deprivation.

6. Recognising this challenge and in line with the Council's commitment to protect vulnerable people, the Council set up the independent York Fairness Commission in July 2011 as part of a Cabinet commitment to tackle poverty and inequality in York. Following public consultation in September and October 2011 the Commission published its Interim Report in November 2011 with 30 recommendations to the council focusing on specific advice on the difficult decisions the Council was tackling in setting its budget for 2012/13 and 2013/14. Cabinet approved a response to these recommendations in February 2012, supporting the proposed Fairness Principles; adopting the majority of the recommendations that aligned with existing strategic priorities; and reflecting these in the 2012/14 budget.
7. The Commission's second phase of engagement with practitioners and experts in March and April of this year focused on inequality issues by six themes: Health and Wellbeing; Income, Economy and Jobs; Education and Training; Housing and Homelessness; Communities of Identity; Communities and Volunteering.
8. Their final report *A better York for everyone* was published and formally presented to the Leader on September 27th. It proposes 10 Fairness Principles, makes 7 headline recommendations and commends more than 100 Ideas for Action to be assessed and actioned.

Consultation

9. In both phases of their work, the Fairness Commission has engaged extensively with the people who live in York and the organisations who work in the city. Through public meetings, online and postal consultation and focused topic-based meetings to review evidence and debate solutions, there has been an opportunity for everyone to contribute.
10. CYC officers and members of the Without Walls (WOW) strategic partnership have also been involved throughout in providing evidence of the issues, information about existing plans and considering what this means for the city.

Progress since the Interim Report

11. Since the interim report was published the Council has already made significant progress in adopting both the principles and delivering on specific recommendations.
12. An Economic Infrastructure Fund of £28m has been set up as an innovative single pot of funding to support the delivery of the Council Plan priority of creating jobs and growing the economy.
13. The Council has maintained its commitment to provide work and training opportunities for young people in the city by recruiting a further 35 apprentices this year.
14. The All York single ticket has been launched – making bus travel across the city more streamlined and less costly in a bid to reduce barriers to work and training opportunities and promote sustainable travel options.
15. The Council's 2012/14 Procurement and Commissioning Strategy has been adopted with a new emphasis on collaborative effort and the delivery of social, economic and environmental benefits as well as overall cost and quality.
16. A new Workforce Strategy, the embedding of the eXtra factor staff recognition scheme and an Employee of the Month award all demonstrate the Council's commitment to become an organisation where staff are engaged, valued and respected.
17. To generate new ideas and implement creative approaches, the Council has provided a £1m fund to facilitate delivery of priorities and support innovation. For example, this has funded a programme in partnership with Science City York to embed the skills and knowledge within the council to continue to harness and develop new ideas capable of saving money and delivering better services.
18. A reduction in the educational 'attainment gap' at Key stages 2 and 4 has been achieved. This means that children who are potentially more vulnerable to low achievement are now attaining results closer to the average for the city.
19. The first Big York survey was designed to help the Council understand the views and needs of all of York's communities of identity and for the

first time measures to reflect the unique perspective of carers were included in the consultation.

20. Recognising the vital role of the voluntary sector, the Council has been working together with York Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) to produce the city's first Voluntary Sector Strategy setting out our shared priorities and ambitions for the city. An example of this in action is the Council's support to a group of voluntary organisations, led by York CVS, to develop a viable business plan for the creation of a Health and Social Care information and support hub in Oliver House.
21. As agreed in February 2012, further work has begun to assess the full implications and possible alternative approaches to a York 'Tourist Tax'. It remains the case that, without a change in legislation, York could not levy a tourist or bed tax and also would not want to implement a charge or tax that could deter visitors, impose an administrative burden on local businesses and potentially undermine the profitability of this sector of the local economy.
22. Instead, alternative options are being pursued. Visit York has joined an early adopters group facilitated by Visit England to evaluate the benefits and options for creating a York Tourism Business Improvement District (BID). This could allow for a levy on tourism businesses to be reinvested in infrastructure and other improvements designed to benefit those businesses. Tourism businesses in York will be fully consulted on any proposals and would be able to vote on the issue. Proposals are at an early stage of development with a view to a potential launch in summer 2014.
23. Work has also been continuing to assess the options for and financial implications of implementing extensions to the travel concessions currently offered to young and disabled people. Officers and the Cabinet Member for Transport have met with First Group to explore alternatives and will bring forward proposals for consideration in the 2013/14 budget review.

Response to the final Report

24. As highlighted above, the Council is already fully engaged in the work to deliver a fairer York and it is proposed that Cabinet welcomes the findings of the Fairness Commission Final Report. It is expected that the independent review by the Commission will provide further stimulus for all partners in the city to work together to tackle inequality.

25. Each recommendation has been given careful consideration. In many areas the Commission's recommendations reinforce a commitment to the existing priorities and initiatives that the Council has already started work on and that form part of the Council Plan 2011-2015. Equally many of the themes and actions are reflected in the WOW partnership's City Action Plan 2011- 2015.
26. In other areas the Commission has highlighted gaps in those priorities or in our plans to deliver them and challenged us to do more and to take a different approach. The work of the Commission is thought-provoking. It has brought together well-researched data and the voice of the people of York to give extensive insight into the effects of the real deprivation that exists in some parts of the city.

The 10 Fairness Principles

27. The draft principles from the interim report that were addressed specifically to the Council have been updated to be of relevance to all organisations in the city. They are intended to help inform, steer and 'fairness proof' all decision making in the city, be that in the public, private or voluntary sectors. Their application will guide long term progress towards a fairer, poverty free York. The principles are:

1 Make reducing income inequalities a core value in decision making, for example by paying a living wage.
2 Build social factors into procurement and contracting to promote good employment practice, enhance local supply chains, reduce inequalities and heighten opportunities for unemployed people in York.
3 Strive for excellence in York's organisations and the way they work together so that corporate social responsibility is the norm, services are delivered efficiently and effectively, and the city builds a reputation as a leader in tackling inequalities.
4 Empower and extend opportunities for disadvantaged groups and individuals.
5 Adopt a long term view and a preventative approach that acts now to prevent bigger problems in the future.
6 Take decisions and run services in an open and transparent manner, listening to and engaging with communities and customers, including the most disadvantaged.
7 Embed a creative and 'can do' culture that strives for new solutions and opportunities, even when there are difficult challenges and limited resources.

8 Exert influence outside York to address external factors that drive inequalities or restrict local action within the city.
9 Target investments and services to reduce inequalities and improve life chances in the most disadvantaged areas.
10 Promote and prioritise sustainable economic growth that maximises opportunities and benefits to all people, including the most disadvantaged (e.g. jobs, wages and wellbeing)

28. In the context of the Council Plan, the above Fairness Principles are compelling. They reinforce the key priorities and core competencies and have already been adopted by the Council and many of its partners. The council is embedding the approach and values expressed in the Fairness Principles in the way it makes decisions and designs and delivers services; and in all its strategies and action plans.
29. This approach is reflected in a refreshed approach to equalities and diversity described in the Single Equality Scheme. It addresses in its objectives and action plans all of the inequality themes identified by the Commission. Its purpose is to deliver greater equality in outcomes across all Council services. Its adoption will go a long way towards ensuring that the required values, governance and monitoring mechanisms are in place to ensure that the Fairness Commission's recommendations are embedded and delivered within the Council.
30. The Commission charges the Council specifically with the responsibility on behalf of the city for ensuring that their recommendations are acted upon and progress is monitored. The best way to ensure that this is achieved and all partners can contribute to reducing inequality in the city is to seek to embed the principles in all strategies and the recommended actions in all delivery plans city-wide. It is proposed therefore that the Council through its leadership of the WOW partnership promotes the adoption of the Principles by all organisations in the city. It is also proposed that the re-constituted Inclusive York Board takes a lead role on fairness and monitoring of progress (through the governance structure proposed in the Single Equality Scheme report).

The Headline Recommendations

31. In line with the approach of embedding within existing strategies, each of the recommendations and *Ideas for Action* has been carefully

considered and reviewed against a number of pre-existing key strategies and delivery plans including:

- The Council Plan [Council Plan 2011-15 \(2.05MB\)](#)
 - The City Action Plan [City Action Plan 2011-2015](#)
 - The Housing Strategy **Housing strategy**
 - The Child Poverty Strategy [Child Poverty Strategy](#)
32. Other strategies published more recently have been developed taking into account the Fairness Principles, the Commission’s interim recommendations and emerging findings. These include the York Economic Strategy and The Children and Young Person’s Plan.
33. The Fairness Commission’s findings and recommendations have also provided valuable input into the formulation of the Financial Inclusion Strategy and the Single Equality Scheme; and will continue to inform the Health and Wellbeing Strategy which is under development and due to be formally adopted in April 2013.
34. Below is a response to each of the report’s Headline Recommendations outlining how it aligns with the Council’s priorities and illustrating progress already made and planned.

Headline Recommendations Analysis/Response

A Make York a Living Wage City and inspire Yorkshire to become a Living Wage Region
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35. The Council has already publicly pledged to work towards all council – employed staff receiving a Living Wage. This is set at a level allowing a “minimum socially acceptable standard of living” with the current rate of £7.20 per hour due to be up-rated in line with increased living costs on 5th November.
36. Detailed proposals which could benefit more than 500 staff will be put before Cabinet in December in a report entitled *Working towards a Living Wage*. The financial decisions to enable this to be fully implemented in 2014/15 will form part of the 2013/15 budget decisions.
37. The commitment to pay the Living Wage means that the Council will be leading the way in York and in the region in tackling in-work poverty. Through its membership of the Association of West Yorkshire

Authorities and the Leeds City Region LEP the Council has been campaigning for other councils to follow its lead. The Council will continue to promote the Living Wage to all employers in the city.

38. The Council's key anti-poverty strategies (the Child Poverty strategy and the Financial Inclusion strategy) reference the Living Wage as a key enabler to reducing poverty and promoting financial inclusion.

B Deliver an inclusive approach to economic development that creates jobs, tackles worklessness, and ensures all of York's citizens can contribute and prosper.

39. The Council's top priority is to create jobs and grow the economy and one of the core principles underpinning the delivery of the York Economic Strategy is the aim of ensuring that all York residents have the opportunity to contribute and benefit from its success.
40. The Council has been working strenuously with business leaders to attract businesses to York and develop a range of job opportunities that match the skills profile of the city.
41. The success of these efforts is demonstrated by the decisions of Hiscox Ltd, the John Lewis Partnership and Marks and Spencer to locate and further invest in York bringing 800 new jobs to the city. The Council will be continuing to work with these businesses as they develop their relocation and recruitment plans to ensure that these opportunities are made accessible to those who most often encounter barriers to work. For example the John Lewis Partnership is already making plans to develop and recruit its workforce in some of the more deprived areas of the city.
42. A recent Jobs Fair organised in partnership with Future Prospects, Job Centre Plus and Learning City is another example of our efforts to bring together employers in the city with job-seekers. 3,500 unemployed job-seekers received a personal invitation from the Leader and more than 1500 residents attended the free event where they were able to talk to many of York's major employers and education providers all under one roof. More than 200 job applications were made on the day with many more to follow online.

C Create a simple and shared system to get help and advice to the people, including an easy to access central information hub, outreach centres and promotional activity.

43. The Council's Customer Strategy aims to meet the needs of customers in the 21st Century. This ranges from providing traditional face-to-face assistance for those in greatest need of support to making use of the newest technology so people can access services, make enquiries, get information and advice or pay their bills in a way and at a time to suit them. The strategy is also designed to make sure that the council continues to protect the most vulnerable people and remains completely in touch with our communities.
44. A key strand in the delivery of the strategy will be the co-location of council and other partner organisations (including the CAB) in a single Customer Centre at West Offices from April 2013. By sharing this advice and information hub with our partners the Council will be extending the range of information and advice available to people in one place and developing stronger working links that will benefit our customers.
45. The Council's Financial Inclusion Strategy also proposes investment in more co-ordination of advice and support in the city and maps out the many sources of advice and information available to help people access work, claim benefits, manage their money and tackle their debts.
46. It also recognises that in addition to centrally-located advice and information it is vital to have advice available for people near where they live and in places they regularly visit and highlights the benefits of targeted outreach campaigns. This mix of access points does effectively complement more specialist/central provision.
47. From the base of an existing well-developed network across the city we can continue to work with our partners towards the achievement of a more comprehensive central information hub, looking at the future role for a combined web portal bringing all sources of information and advice together.

D Urgently address the city's housing and accommodation needs to improve availability and affordability for all, and to support sustainable economic growth, backed by a long term strategic framework.

48. The Commission is right to identify that there is an urgent need to address the shortage of housing supply in York – both for the economic benefits that it will bring and because of the pressing social need of the many households who cannot access affordable housing.
49. The Council has already recognised this need and it is a key priority. It has developed a Get York Building programme to understand and tackle the current barriers to residential development. A Project Board has been set up to drive this work forward. A range of possible interventions is being considered and will be reported to Cabinet in the New Year.
50. To kick-start the programme York's Strategic Housing Forum will be launched in Housing Week (commencing 5th November) to enlist the support and involvement of partners across the city.
51. Activity to review and help restart stalled developments is already bearing fruit with the recent success in securing Get Britain Building funding to support a stalled development.
52. Also, the Council has submitted a bid to the Government's Traveller Pitch Fund as part of its long-held commitment to provide sites for gipsy and traveller communities who want to preserve their traditional way of life.

E Make far greater use of early intervention, preventative measures and community based care to support and promote health, independent living and inclusion.

53. This recommendation is at the heart of the strategy being developed by York's shadow Health and Wellbeing Board. This powerful coalition of senior public and voluntary sector health and social care commissioning and delivery partners is working together to make improvements to the health and wellbeing of York residents. Its remit is to: know and understand the health and wellbeing needs of York; agree the priorities for the city; and translate this into action through all commissioning decisions, services planning and delivery.
54. A comprehensive Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has been developed to inform the Board's decision about priorities. Work is currently underway to develop a Health and Wellbeing Strategy which will set out what key organisations will do over the next 3 years to address these priorities. This will be approved in April 2013.

55. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy will confirm the Board's aspiration for more early intervention and prevention measures, particularly shifting towards a model of community based care and support. This approach underpins all five priorities in the strategy – these are:

- making York a great place for older people to live in
- Reducing health inequality
- Improving mental health and intervening early
- Enabling all children and young people to have the best start in life
- Creating a financially sustainable local health and wellbeing system

56. The Health and Wellbeing Board recognises the importance of the Fairness Commission's work to address inequality in our city. Inequality is complex and multifaceted – it relates to a wide range of disciplines and organisations across sectors. The Health and Wellbeing Board will be a vehicle for delivering a number of the health and wellbeing recommendations within the Fairness Commission 'Findings and Recommendations' report and the companion report 'Ideas for Action'.

F Ensure childcare, the learning environment and education help to tackle inequalities.
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57. The new Children and Young People's Plan 2013-16 for the City of York was launched on 23rd October. The new Plan, 'Dream Again', reflects on the progress partners have made over the past three years to improve outcomes for children, young people and families, but does not shy away from naming the challenges ahead in striving to make York the best place in which to live and grow up. Neither does it deny the challenging financial climate within which the Council works. To turn the plan and its priorities into reality a separate and more detailed action plan is being produced. It shows what the Council will do, where responsibility for actions will rest and how progress will be monitored.

58. The Plan has drawn on the issues and ideas raised throughout the Fairness Commission's work as well as a wide range of other consultation and includes the following priorities of specific relevance to this recommendation:

- improving the educational attainment and outcomes for Looked After Children, and in particular the education of children placed outside of York;
- further narrowing the gap in educational outcomes for other vulnerable pupils in the city, including those who have special educational needs, those who are in receipt of free school meals and Traveller pupils;
- increasing the number of free child care places for vulnerable two-year olds from 50 to 350;
- keeping a sharper focus on the education and attainment of the 0-5s, children who are at risk of being excluded from school and pupils in mainstream schools who need specialist support;
- developing school-to-school support and improving arrangements to support leadership across the school community;
- introducing a pre-birth to 14 literacy policy to help drive up standards, outcomes and consistency through all early years settings;
- identifying, and further responding to the needs of, Young Carers.

G Further assess the full range of ideas and proposals for action made in our companion report 'Ideas for Action' and agree mechanisms for taking them forward.

59. The Ideas for Action report (Annex B) lists more than 100 ideas for new or further action across all of the Commission's themes. In many instances they add further support to the headline recommendations. Along with the main recommendations these have been reviewed for relevance against existing strategies and plans and will be incorporated as appropriate.
60. The Council will also promote a similar approach by its partners through discussion in the WOW forums.

Implications

61. **Financial** – any financial implications of actions to further the Fairness Commission recommendations as described in this report will be

reflected in the forthcoming 2013/14 Capital and Revenue Budget Reports.

62. **Human Resources (HR)** – the potential HR implications of implementing a Living Wage will be brought to members when detailed proposals are formulated.
63. **Equalities** – the Fairness Commission’s consultation and recommendations have directly informed the development of the Council’s proposed new Single Equalities Scheme which represents a refreshed approach to equality and diversity.
64. **Legal** – Local authorities in the UK do not currently have the legal power to levy a bed tax or tourist tax. This would require legislation. Legal implications in relation to other ideas under consideration will need to be considered at part of the review of those ideas.
65. There are no **Crime and Disorder, Information Technology, Property**, or other implications arising from this report.

Corporate Priorities / Council Plan

66. The Fairness Commission recommendations and the Council’s proposed responses are in line with key outcomes identified throughout the Council Plan with most emphasis on the Create Jobs and Grow the Economy, Build Strong Communities and Protect Vulnerable People priorities. It is proposed that the further work highlighted by the recommendations is identified and embedded into Directorate’s Service Plans, and that overall progress towards outcomes is managed through the Council Plan Delivery Boards and monitored through the ongoing tracking of the Council Plan.

Risk Management

67. There are no known risks in adopting the Fairness Commission’s recommendations.

Recommendations

68. Cabinet is asked to approve the proposed response to each of the Headline Recommendations noting how they will contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan priorities.

69. Cabinet is also asked to approve the proposals for the ongoing ownership and monitoring of the Fairness Principles and Recommendations as described in paragraph 30.
70. Cabinet is asked to note that the financial implications of implementing the Living Wage and extending concessionary fares will be brought forward in the 2013/15 budget papers for decision.

Contact Details

Author:

Jane Collingwood
 Strategy & Development
 Officer
 Office of the Chief Executive
 01904 553407
jane.collingwood@york.gov.uk

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Kersten England
 Chief Executive

Report **Date** 25.10.12
Approved

Specialist Implications Officers

Financial	HR
Tracey Carter	Pauline Stuchfield
AD Finance, Asset Management & Procurement	AD Customers & Employees
01904 553419	01904 551100

Legal
 Andy Docherty
 AD Governance & ICT
 01904 551004

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A: The York Fairness Commission final report:
A better York for everyone – Findings and Recommendations
27.9.12 <http://www.yorkfairnesscommission.org.uk/>

Annex B: The York Fairness Commission final report:
A better York for everyone – Ideas for Action
27.9.12 <http://www.yorkfairnesscommission.org.uk/>

Background Papers:

The York Fairness Commission Interim Report: *A fairer York, a better York*
28.11.2011

<http://www.yorkfairnesscommission.org.uk/>

The Council Plan [Council Plan 2011-15 \(2.05MB\)](#)

<http://www.york.gov.uk/council/plan/>

The City Action Plan [City Action Plan 2011-2015](#)

<http://www.yorkwow.org.uk/meetings/>

The Housing Strategy **Housing strategy**

http://www.york.gov.uk/housing/Housing_plans_and_strategies/housin_strategy/

The Child Poverty Strategy [Child Poverty Strategy](#)

<http://www.york.org.uk/Workforce/Training%20and%20Workforce%20Development/ChildPoverty>