

Meeting	Cabinet
Date	6 January 2015
Present	Councillors Williams (Chair), Crisp, Cunningham, Levene, Looker, Simpson-Laing (Vice-Chair) and Steward
In attendance	Councillors Merrett, Richardson and Watson

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## 75. **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.

Councillor Looker declared a personal non prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 7 (Disposal of the Theatre Royal to the York Conservation Trust) as a patron of the York Theatre Royal.

## 76. **Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been two registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme and that three Members of Council had also requested to speak on items, details of which are set out below:

### **Disposal of the Theatre Royal to the York Conservation Trust**

Liz Wilson, Chief Executive of the York Theatre Trust spoke in support of the disposal of the Theatre Royal to the Trust. She referred to the history of and the investment required to the building. As a not for profit organisation, she confirmed that the Trust would ensure funding to maintain its heritage for the city and secure the buildings future.

Philip Thake, spoke as Chief Executive of the York Conservation Trust with reference to disposal of the building to the Trust. In particular to the generous offer made by the Trust, owing to the poor condition of the building and the urgent

repairs required to the roof. He also referred to the Theatre's ten year wish list which could be brought forward if disposal to the Trust was agreed.

Cllr Watson questioned details of the 25 year lease to the York Citizen's Theatre Trust and the CYC contribution to fund the refurbishment and improvement of the Theatre. He expressed concern at the state of the building and questioned whether the Council would still provide grants to the Theatre following its sale.

### **Implementation of Budget Savings on Council Funded Local Bus Services**

Cllr Merrett spoke as one of the Micklegate Ward members, regarding the effects of budget savings proposals on local bus services which served his ward. In particular to the number of elderly residents who depended on these services and to the Sunday services used by church goers and shop workers. He asked Cabinet to look at the use of marketing, particularly in relation to a campaign to 'use it or lose it' for all the services that would be affected by these cuts.

Cllr Richardson also spoke against the proposed cuts to bus services across the city. In relation to his rural ward he highlighted the effects on residents in gaining access to the city. He pointed out that, whilst the authority were promoting iTravel, they were also proposing to cut services. He also referred to advertising issues in respect of bus timetables, in particular relating to Service 14.

#### **77. Forward Plan**

Members received and noted details of those items on the Forward Plan for the next two Cabinet meetings, at the time the agenda was published.

#### **78. Equalities Scrutiny Review Final Report**

Consideration was given to the final report and recommendations, set out below, from the Equalities Scrutiny Review. The review's aim had been to encourage wider involvement in the Council's democratic traditions by raising awareness across York's Communities of Identity, particularly those with protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act.

## Review Recommendations:

- i. Feedback from consultation to be taken into account as part of the ongoing work to update the Council's website <sup>1</sup>.
- ii. New Councillor Induction to include ward demographics / profiles and information on the Joint Service Needs Assessment at ward level <sup>2</sup>.
- iii. Members training on corporate equalities and at ward level to be mandatory. <sup>3</sup>.
- iv. Member Training to be provided on Community Impact Assessments (CIAs) <sup>4</sup>.
- v. Consideration to be given to improving CYC communication, including better use of Community Hubs, use of other organisations communication tools, and University Community Groups <sup>5</sup>.
- vi. Equality Advisory Group (EAG) to consider its membership to ensure it properly reflects all of York's Communities of Identity and identify improvements in the way it engages with those Communities, recognising that the organisations currently involved do not represent all of the COIs in the city. <sup>6</sup>.
- vii. Facilities to be provided in the lobby area of West Offices to enable improved access to information for, and greater participation by members of the public. <sup>7</sup>.

As both Cllr Potter, as Chair of the Task Group appointed to carry out the review and Cllr Galvin, as Chair of the Corporate & Scrutiny Management Committee, the parent committee, had been unable to attend the meeting, the Cabinet Member presented the report. She expressed her support for the work of the Task Group and its important role in understanding the barriers to involvement. She also expressed her support for further Member training on equalities and community impact assessments.

Following further discussion, it was

Resolved: That having considered the final report and annexes of the Equalities Scrutiny Review, Cabinet approve the recommendations as set out above and at paragraph 4 of the report.

Reason: To conclude the Scrutiny Review in line with CYC Scrutiny procedures and protocols.

Action Required

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| 1. Update of Council website to take account of feedback from consultation during Equalities Scrutiny Review.                       | RG     |
| 2&3. Provide mandatory Members corporate equality training and & include new Councillor Induction training on ward demographics etc | DS     |
| 4. Arrange Member training on CIA's.  | MB     |
| 5. Consider improvement to CYC communication in light of findings of Review.  | MB, CC |
| 6. To consider membership of EAG to ensure it represents all of York's Communities of Identity.                                     | CC     |
| 7. Examine facilities for improved access to information in West Offices entrance.  | PS     |

**79. "A Fairer York" - Progress on developing York's Equality Scheme**

Members considered a report which set out details of the approach being taken and progress being made towards developing a new equality plan – “A Fairer York” for the city covering the period 2015-17.

The report outlined the consultation work undertaken and the groups involved, at Annex A, and the resulting list of priorities and the indicators that would underpin them at Annexes B to E. The plan would be owned by the Fairness and Equalities Board and it was anticipated that it would be completed in February for sign off by the Board. A public launch of the plan would be carried out for maximum impact with monitoring based on outcomes through the equality indicators.

The Cabinet Member confirmed her support for the plan which, despite its challenges, would provide meaningful priorities to highlight the areas in which the city could improve and an action plan of activities to ensure the city become a fairer place for all.

Resolved: That Cabinet note progress made and the proposed way forward in relation to York's Equality Scheme, and that there will be a future Member Decision on whether the Council will sign up to the plan.

Reason: To allow work to continue, on behalf of the Fairness and Equalities Board, in pursuit of A Fairer York.

## **80. Implementation of Budget Savings on Council Funded Local Bus Services**

Members considered a report which outlined a list of Council funded bus services which it was proposed to withdraw/amend, in order to meet the £200k saving required to the subsidy provided for local bus services, as part of the 2015/16 budget process.

Although some cost reductions had been made, following detailed discussions with the City's bus operators, the majority of the budgetary reductions had however to be found through service withdrawals or reductions. Each of the service reductions/revisions and their associated savings were reported at paragraphs 24 to 51 and at Table 2.

The report asked Cabinet to approve Option A, below to reduce the supported bus budget by £212,094 in order to implement the resulting reductions in service.

Option A – to deliver £212k of savings to the local bus budget in 2015/16 applying the established bus subsidy criteria with the exception of Route 21 which is subject to decisions in adjacent authorities and for which a further decision will be taken next year.

Option B - alter the Council's established criteria for the provision of bus service support and to deliver a total of £247k of savings to the local bus budget in 2015/16.

The Chair thanked Officers for their comprehensive report in response to the savings request made at the budget Council meeting in February 2014. He acknowledged the effects of these proposals on elderly and vulnerable residents and to the Council's sustainable transport agenda, highlighting the need for improved marketing of the services and work with partners. He therefore confirmed that, having heard the representations, he would not support the proposed reductions and route changes

recommended although alternative savings would be required elsewhere. He then moved and it was

Resolved: That Cabinet agree:

- (i) Not to make the recommended budget savings in relation to the withdrawal/reduction of bus routes;
- (ii) To undertake consultation on the criteria used for the funding of subsidised bus services; <sup>1.</sup>
- (iii) That the Director of City and Environmental Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning & Economic Development, be delegated authority to make alternative efficiencies in services which does not involve the withdrawal of any bus routes. That thereafter any remaining shortfall be dealt with by the Director of CBSS in the annual Budget process. <sup>2.</sup>

Reason: In order to retain existing services and provide transport for residents in areas where local bus operators are unable or unwilling to provide bus services commercially.

Action Required

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| 1. Undertake consultation on criteria.  | AB      |
| 2. To find alternative efficiencies in services in conjunction with the Cabinet Member. | SCT, IF |

**81. Disposal of the Theatre Royal to the York Conservation Trust**

Members considered a report which set out proposals for disposal of the Theatre Royal to the York Conservation Trust for the nominal sum of £1, in order to ensure that necessary repairs were undertaken to the Theatre to support its major refurbishment programme.

The proposal had arisen from the Council's asset review, undertaken to examine opportunities to reduce the ongoing repairs and maintenance cost of the Council's assets in order to support other projects. Whilst the Theatre had been successful in securing funding for a programme of refurbishment and improvement, the building was in poor condition and the

majority funder, Arts Council England, were unwilling to fund the works whilst the building was in a poor state of repair.

In answer to earlier questions, Members confirmed that the Theatre had signed a 25 year lease with the York Citizen's Theatre Trust in September 2014, in order to access grant monies. It was also confirmed that the authority would continue to appoint Members on to the Theatre Trust and provide grant funding.

Members expressed their full support for the proposals, highlighting York Conservation Trusts excellent record in the maintenance of buildings and confirming that it was felt that the disposal was in the best interests of the city.

Consideration was then given to the following options:

Option 1 – Retain and undertake capital repairs to the Theatre Royal

Option 2 - Dispose of the Theatre Royal on the open market

Option 3 – Dispose of the Theatre Royal to York Conservation Trust

Resolved: That Cabinet agrees to dispose of the Theatre Royal, York for £1 to York Conservation Trust to lease to York Citizens Theatre Trust and to reduce the commercial income budget by £23,000 pa from 2015/16. <sup>1</sup>.

Reason: To ensure the long term operation of the Theatre Royal and remove ongoing financial repairs and maintenance liabilities for the Council.

Action Required

1. Proceed with disposal.

TC, CC

Cllr D Williams, Chair

[The Meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.20 pm].