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Meeting	Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date	18 June 2014
Present	Councillors Reid (Chair), Fitzpatrick (Vice-Chair), Brooks, Gunnell, Taylor, Scott and Hodgson (Substitute for Cllr Potter) Mr Pennington (Co-opted Statutory Member)
In Attendance	Councillor Barnes and Semlyen
Apologies	Councillor Potter Mr Thomas (Co-opted Statutory Member)

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## 1. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included in the register of interests, any prejudicial interests or disclosable interests which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda or any other general interests they might have within the remit of the committee other than those listed within the agenda.

Councillor Taylor declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 (York Museums Trust Partnership Delivery Plan: Performance Update 2013-14 – End of Year Report) as he is a member of the Friends of Shandy Hall and in agenda 5 (Introductory Report on Proposed Scrutiny Topics for Review in 2014-15) as he is employed by City Screen who have undertaken surveys with regard to facilities for disabled people.

Councillor Fitzpatrick declared a personal interest in agenda item 6 (Update on Stonewall Challenge) as she had been involved in the work undertaken by the Senior Adviser for Behaviour, Attendance and Safety.

## 2. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 30 April 2014 be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record.

With regard to minute 53 (Attendance of Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Tourism), Members advised that they had not received clarification of the period to which the figures on

visitor spending related and the reasons for the increase. The Assistant Director (Communities, Culture and Public Realm) agreed to forward this information to committee members.

Action Required

1. Assistant Director to ensure requested information on visitor spending is provided to committee members. CC

### **3. Public Participation**

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

### **4. York Museums Trust Partnership Delivery Plan: Performance Update 2013/14 - End of Year Report**

Members received a report that updated them on the current progress of the York Museums Trust (YMT) towards meeting the targets agreed in the Partnership Delivery Plan. The Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer were in attendance to present the Performance Update Report for the period October 2013 to March 2014.

With regard to work at the Castle Museum, Members were advised that the new exhibition in Debtors Prison was due to open soon. Works undertaken had included the refurbishment of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors which had resulted in the museum becoming more streamlined in terms of visitor flow and had also provided the opportunity to look closely at the museums collections. Committee Members were invited to attend the formal opening of the new exhibition which they were advised would take place on 16<sup>th</sup> July. Members asked for an update on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the previously undertaken YMT scrutiny review.

With regard to the Art Gallery Project, the Committee were informed that good progress was being made and it was now possible to get a good idea of the space. The Chief Executive invited Members to view the works being undertaken. Members felt this would be beneficial and it was agreed that a visit be arranged.

Members were provided with an update on the Exhibition Square Development and the development of the gardens behind the Art Gallery

and they were advised that the same landscape gardener was working on both these developments in order to provide continuity.

The Chief Executive acknowledged that the cut in budgets would require them to think radically, consider any restructuring needed and give consideration to new income streams. She explained that they would like to take forward a YMT supporter scheme and were currently doing some research into models across the country, with the other option of building on the joint ticket option which currently allows entry to the Castle Museum and Yorkshire Museum. She explained there was a need to change the perception of the Trust and reposition YMT in the public mind as a charity which needed to be supported.

With regard to stabilising visitor figures during the six months to March 2014, Members noted an one percent increase overall in visitor figures which included a 26 percent increase at the Yorkshire Museum. The acknowledged that the Castle Museum had seen a 3 percent decrease in visitor figures but accepted that this could be due to part of the museum being closed during its major redevelopment and that the drop in visitors to St Mary's was likely to be due to York Art Gallery being closed. Members commended the increase in visits by York school children.

Resolved: (i) That the performance of the York Museums Trust be commented on and noted.

(ii) That Committee Members be invited to a tour of the Art Gallery in order to see the works in progress.

(ii) That an update on the recommendations of the previous scrutiny review be provided at a future meeting of the committee as part of the next bi-annual Performance report.

Reason: To fulfil the Council's role under the partnership delivery plan.

## **5. Introductory Report on Proposed Scrutiny Topics for Review in 2014/15**

Members received a report that provided introductory information on the topics proposed for scrutiny review during this municipal year. They noted that the committee had put forward two possible topics to the annual scrutiny work planning event on 12 May. These were Narrowing the Gap and Disabled Access to York's Cultural Sector. They acknowledged that Councillor Semlyen had also submitted an extra topic for the committee's consideration on "School Based Teaching of skills related to self

employment/entrepreneurship at secondary ages and at York College. Members were informed that at the event, it had also been agreed that a corporate review around “Supporting Elderly People” be undertaken.

Councillor Semlyen addressed the committee with regard to her suggested topic on “School Based Teaching of skills related to self employment/entrepreneurship”. She explained that the Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ECDOSC) had agreed to carry out a review looking into entrepreneurship and risk taking as a route to getting into higher paid jobs, but stated that the teaching of entrepreneurial skills should start before the age of 18 and that undertaking her suggested review would add value to the ECDOSC topic and benefit this committee at the same time. An information sheet had been circulated to committee members which provided information on “Business in a Box” and “Not Just a Trading Company” in relation to the proposed review.

Members accepted that there was a need for improvement in the employability skills of York’s young people and acknowledged the need for young people to learn broader employability skills at younger ages. Members questioned whether it was in fact possible to teach “entrepreneurship” and were advised that entrepreneurial skills were key transferable skills, whether someone worked for themselves or for an employer. The committee agreed there was a need to think about the broader skills a young person needed to prepare them to be flexible and able to deal with future. Members accepted that the school curriculum was heavily prescribed by central government and a school’s ability to have a flexible approach and to have a diverse curriculum was more limited than 10 years ago.

The majority of Members agreed that the proposed topic was a good idea which could add value but requested further information from officers on the possible scope for the review.

It was agreed that the previous Careers Review Task Group (comprising Councillors Brooks, Fitzpatrick, Reid and Scott) be reconvened to look at the issues put forward in Cllr Semlyen’s proposal and that Councillor Semlyen be called as a witness in the review.

Councillor Barnes addressed the Committee with regard to his proposed topic on disabled access to York’s Cultural Sector. He thanked the Scrutiny Officer for preparing the information contained in Annex A which provided the current information available regarding disabled access to York’s cultural venues. He stressed that putting forward the proposal was not a suggestion that access for disabled people in York was bad, but instead saying that we didn’t actually know how good or bad the access was.

He suggested it would be beneficial to contact the Independent Living Network to find out what their experiences of accessing tourist attractions in York were. It would also be beneficial to look at best practice elsewhere to look at what other tourist cities were doing. He stressed the importance of not seeing someone as disabled but doing what was necessary to enable them to be able to participate fully. He informed Members that this needed to be in a proactive way, rather than just restricting oneself to achieving legal requirements and by making the information more accessible.

Members expressed their full support for what they agreed was an excellent proposal which could make a real difference in York. It was agreed that a Task Group, comprising Councillors Brooks, Fitzpatrick and Gunnell, be established to undertake the review. The Committee agreed that Councillor Barnes should be co-opted onto the Task Group for the duration of the review.

Members also discussed the corporate review around “Supporting Elderly People”. They considered the two suggested topics contained in the handout which had been circulated to the committee but were not convinced that the two suggestions were suitable for the committee to undertake.

The Committee debated whether it would be possible to carry out the “Disabled Access to York’s Cultural Sector” review in a way that it included elderly people but Members expressed concerns about stigmatising people who were getting older and associating them with having a disability. They agreed that this approach would not do justice to either topic. Most Members however agreed that, the information which would come out of the Disabled Access to York’s Cultural Sector review would benefit everybody in society, including elderly people.

The Committee decided to concentrate on the “Disabled Access to York’s Cultural Sector” review put forward by Councillor Barnes and then determine whether the recommendations from this review could benefit elderly people. It was agreed the Committee should write to the Older People’s Assembly to ask them what issues they have which they think the committee would benefit from looking at with a view to this becoming a topic for a future scrutiny review either this municipal year or next year.

Resolved: (i) That the report and additional information on the proposed reviews be noted.

(ii) That the previously established Careers Review Task Group (comprising Councillors Brooks, Fitzpatrick, Reid and

Scott) be reconvened to carry out a review of Councillor Semlyen's proposed review on "School Based Teaching of Skills Related to Self Employment/Entrepreneurship" and that Councillor Semlyen be called as a witness in this review

(iii) That a Task Group, comprising Councillors Brooks, Fitzpatrick and Gunnell, be set up to undertake a review on "Disabled Access to York's Cultural Sector" and that Councillor Barnes be co-opted onto the Task Group.

(iv) That the Committee agree not to participate in the corporate review of elderly people at the present time.

(v) That the Committee write to the Older People's Assembly to ask them what issues they have which they think would benefit from future scrutiny review.

Reason: To progress the work of the Committee

## **6. Update on Stonewall Challenge**

Members received a report that updated them on the work of the City of York Council (CYC) Anti Bullying Strategy Group led by the Senior Adviser Behaviour Attendance and Safety, to tackle homophobic bullying in York Schools.

The Senior Advisor of Behaviour Attendance and Safety attended the meeting to present the report. She advised Members that out of the consultation, York High had invited Simon Rodgers, an AVIVA Stonewall volunteer, to work with the school and talk to staff and students about his experiences as a gay student who was bullied at school and the effect that the use of homophobic language had on him and has on LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual) students. She stated that Simon had done an exemplary piece of work at the school and as a result has eradicated homophobic language at the school. She advised Members that the hope was to be able to train their own Stonewall role models to continue this work. She explained that it was more effective for individual schools to join up to Stonewall than to join as an authority and she advised that alongside secondary schools, they were also now working with primary schools.

Members thanked the Senior Advisor for her report. They agreed that it would be good to get support from all schools and to be able to find a local role model to continue the work undertaken by Simon Rodgers.

Resolved: That the update and work of the CYC Anti Bullying Strategy Group be noted.

Reason: In order to keep the Committee informed of the Council's work in support of Stonewall.

## **7. Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee Workplan 2014/15**

Members considered the workplan for the Committee for the 2014/15 municipal year.

Members noted that the formal opening of the Debtors Prison new exhibition, to which they were to be invited, clashed with their next Committee meeting and agreed to look at an alternative date on which to hold their next meeting. It was suggested that the meeting be moved back a week to Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July and that an email be sent to Committee Members confirm availability for this date.

Members noted that they were due to receive an overview report on the project plan for Narrowing the Gap at their next meeting. Although other suggestions had now been put forward as possible topics for scrutiny review, the committee agreed it would still be beneficial to receive the report as planned.

Members requested an update on the recommendations from the previously completed York Museums Trust Review as part of the Trust's next biannual Performance report.

Resolved: (i) That the workplan be agreed subject to the agreed amendments as above.

(ii) That committee members be consulted on their availability to attend the next meeting on the suggested date of 22 July 2014.

Reason: To keep the Committees workplan updated.

Councillor Reid, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 8.15 pm].