
Meeting	Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date	17 July 2013
Present	Councillors Reid (Chair), Fitzpatrick (Vice-Chair), Barnes, Brooks, Potter and Taylor and Mr Pennington (Co-opted Statutory Member)
Apologies	Councillor Scott and Mrs Barber (Co-opted Statutory Member)

9. **Declarations of Interest**

Members were asked to declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests, other than their standing declarations.

Councillor Fitzpatrick declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 3 (York Theatre Royal Performance Report: 2012/13) as a Trustee of the Theatre.

Councillor Taylor also declared a personal interest in the same item as he had helped with the promotion of the ishandy production.

No other interests were declared.

10. **Public Participation**

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

11. **York Theatre Royal Performance Report: 2012/ 2013**

Members received a report which informed them of the progress and performance of York Theatre Royal under the current Service Level Agreement (SLA) during 2012/13.

In addition to events mentioned in the Officer's report, Members were informed that the Theatre Royal had acquired funding to run a National Symposium in relation to the development of "TakeOver" venues. Work would take place in conjunction with the Tate and it was hoped that further funding to support young people's responsibility for running the programme of the Theatre.

Questions from Members to Officers included the following;

- How often was the SLA reviewed?
- What was the criteria used for reviewing the targets within the SLA?
- How was consistency applied to the process?
- Would the Council extract a consultancy fee from the Tate for work carried out on the TakeOver venues project?
- Would the National Symposium be based in York?
- Should a strict SLA be applied to the Arts Barge project?

Members were informed that some of the targets in the SLA document between the Council and the Theatre were qualitative and others quantitative. They felt that it was not unreasonable for the Theatre Royal to ask the Council to review the SLA given the background of funding cuts. It was also reported that the SLA would be considered by the Cabinet Member before being approved.

In regards to the Arts Barge, Officers reported that they had a small SLA with Rivers Funding, but that as Rivers Funding had their own European Investment Funding (EIF), the Barge would be included in the SLA between them and EIF.

It was also reported that the Arts Fund had recently released new funds and that further work continued to be carried out between the Council and Reinvigorate York on the Cultural Quarter.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To fulfil the Council's role under the Service Agreement.

12. **Bi-Annual Safeguarding Update**

Members received a six monthly report from the Chair of City of York Safeguarding Children's Board (CYSCB) and the Assistant Director for Children's Specialist Services which updated them on key children's safeguarding issues.

Questions from Members to Officers included;

- How had lessons learnt from the CYSCB's thematic review into child neglect had been spread across all agencies involved in children's services?
- What was being done to recognise the need, rather than the troublesome nature of young people who were subject to Child Sex Exploitation?
- What was the current situation in York in regards to the Government's Trouble Families Initiative?
- To what extent was an impact on the "Front Door" process being felt in York due to the changes outlined in the report?

It was reported that conclusions from the CYSCB's review into child neglect had been disseminated to other agencies via;

- The CYSCB conference (which had been attended by Professor Eileen Munro).
- A full child neglect report to all agencies in the city
- An audit report findings to all staff involved in children's services.
- Face to face meetings with staff so they could carry out good practice.

In regards to recognition of the need of young people subject to Child Sexual Exploitation, Members were informed that the Safeguarding Board hoped to meet with School Head teachers so that they could inform parents, to make sure that everyone was aware of the symptoms of Child Sexual Exploitation. Also the Safeguarding Board and Council planned to 'turn up the volume' on resilience to create a culture of safety for young people to be aware that developing sexuality was not just linked with exploitation.

It was reported that the Safeguarding Board had been notified that there were 315 Troubled Families resident in York.

However, the Board took the view to target a larger number and carried out work with Troubled Families through three hubs where social workers could work with the local communities. It was reported that through this work, agencies had managed to reach and help close to 700 families. Although this was a higher number than previously identified, Officers felt that this could be deemed to be a success as it showed a reduction in the number of children taken into care.

Regarding changes on the Front Door process, it was noted that the changes had acted as a catalyst. There was not a sense that there had been a reduction in engagement from the Police in the process and that allowed for the best intelligence about concerns to aid a preventative approach.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the report be noted and that the Committee continue to receive summarised briefings of cases reviewed by the CYSCB.
 - (ii) That an updates on the following be included in the December 2013 scrutiny briefing:
 - The review of the CYSCB.
 - The trends in York's Looked After Children (LAC)'s population.
 - The preparation and planning arrangements for York's next inspection.
 - (iii) That a progress briefing on the Children's 'Front Door' development is presented to the Scrutiny Committee's June 2014 meeting.

Reason: To allow Members to be fully informed on key children's safeguarding issues.

13. 2012-13 Finance and Performance Year End Report - Lifelong Learning & Culture and Children & Young People's Services

Members received a report which analysed the outturn performance for 2012/14 and the financial outturn position by reference to the service plans and budgets for all of the relevant services falling under the responsibility of the Director of

Children's Services, Education & Skills and the Director of Communities & Neighbourhoods.

The Director of Children's Services, Education & Skills drew Members attention to;

- York had the highest percentage of Looked After Children in Foster Care in the UK and a low level of them living in residential homes.
- That although there had been a 60% reduction in the School Improvement Budget that there were more schools graded by OFSTED as 'outstanding' and 'good' than previously.
- That Officers were positive about the Key Stage 2 results for children in the city.

Officers were asked questions regarding;

- A budget cut in safeguarding i.e. how alternative sources of funding were being identified within new health structures?
- The costs of Local Foster Placements
- If trends for achievement at Key Stage 2 and 4 continue, how would intellectual rigour and complacency be maintained?

It was noted that the safeguarding budget had been examined by Officers. However, Officers underlined that through partnership working, priorities had been funded effectively. For example the Council had shared information with schools on LAC who they were concerned about and vice versa.

Members were informed that a Local Foster Placement cost the Council approximately £20,000 a year.

In regards to an upward trend of results at Key Stages 2 and 4 in York schools, it was noted that the Council's Human Resources Team collected intelligence about teachers performance.

Following a request from Members, Officers agreed to provide further information about the cost of Children's Social Care in York, and information on the OFSTED results for York Schools and changes to the OFSTED regime.

- Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That further information on the cost of Children's Social Care in York and information on the OFSTED results and the new OFSTED regime be provided at the Committee's next meeting in September 2013.¹

Reason: To update the Committee on the final financial and performance position for 2012/13.

Action Required

1. To provide appropriate reports for the September KH Scrutiny meeting.

14. School Meals Scrutiny Review - Scoping Report

Members received a report which presented information in support of the agreed scrutiny review of school meals and asked them to set up a Task Group to carry out the review, agree the review remit and timeframe for its completion. Members agreed that whilst the review would focus on the take up of Free School Meals (FSM), it would also look at the take up of school meals in York generally.

Discussion between Members took place on what else the review could focus on such as;

- Aspects of behaviour- if children entitled to FSM were not taking up the opportunity for school lunches, what were they doing instead?
- If schools could be more creative in what they provided, such as Free School Packed Lunches rather than hot food?
- What consistency was there amongst schools in the city, given that the price of meals was higher in York than in other Local Authorities?
- Comparing the take up of FSM with School Meals in general, particularly amongst different schools at primary and secondary level.

- To examine what the approaches were to FSM at schools who had their meals provided under the ISS (Education) contract.

Some Members expanded on feedback from the Youth Council about the stigma encountered by pupils who were entitled to FSM. They felt that this could be countered by teachers and school staff leading by example, eating in the School canteen.

Councillors Potter, Fitzpatrick, Brooks and Andrew Pennington (co-opted Committee Member) expressed their interest in being on the Task Group. They agreed to appoint a Chair and set a remit for the group at their first meeting.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the report be noted and that a Task Group be established to examine the topic of School Meals in York.
 - (ii) That Councillors Potter, Fitzpatrick, Brooks and Andrew Pennington form the Task Group to undertake the work.
 - (iii) That the general remit for the review be focused on improving the take up of School Meals and Free School Meals.
 - (iv) That the actual wording for the review aim and objectives be agreed at the Task Group's first meeting.

Reason: To ensure compliance with scrutiny procedures, protocols and workplans.

15. Work plan

Members considered the Committee's work plan for the 2013-14 municipal year.

The Scrutiny Officer outlined an approach, recently agreed at Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee (CSMC) for each Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake a review in this municipal year in support of an overarching themed topic namely, the Night-time Economy in York.

The final report of each Committee's review would be presented and considered at the CSMC meeting in March 2014.

The Committee agreed that their work on the topic they had previously agreed to carry out on improving the quality of the heritage and arts offer in the city could be focused specifically on the evening offer. As it had already been scheduled into the workplan for the end of 2013, it would be ideal as their contribution to the new themed approach.

It was also agreed that the Committee should keep an overview of the progress of York's parks in achieving "Green Flag" status, and that this be added to the work plan for the Committee's March 2014 meeting.

Resolved: That the work plan be noted and amended to include the following;

- A progress report on the Children's "Front Door" be considered at the Committee's June 2014 meeting.

Reason: To keep the Committee's work plan updated.

Councillor Reid, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.15 pm].