
Meeting	Learning & Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	20 October 2015
Present	Councillors Taylor (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Dew, Looker, K Myers and Wells Dr Dickinson (Co-opted Statutory Member) and Mr Thomas (Co-opted Statutory Member)
Apologies	Councillor Jackson

27. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or disclosable pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda.

Mr Thomas (Co-opted Statutory Member) declared a personal interest regarding item 5, Explore Libraries and Archives Mutual: Performance Update, that he was a working author and received support from the library.

28. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Learning and Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 September 2015 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record following a change in item 20, Public Participation, and add in after the word renamed 'and suggested York Market was a 'shambles' to the last sentence.

29. Public Participation

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

30. York Safeguarding Board Bi-annual Update & Attendance of Chair

The Chair of the York Safeguarding Children's Board was in attendance to update Members on the annual report and the work of the Board.

The Chair confirmed:

- Early help, neglect, child sexual exploitation, missing from education and domestic abuse would still remain the Boards priority areas in 2015/16 and they would ensure these areas were embedded into all partner organisations.
- A joint campaign with NSPCC called 'It's Not Ok' would be launched to raise awareness on child sexual abuse.
- 16% of enquiries received were around neglect and around 26% of single assessments also highlighted neglect as an issue. The Board would continue to emphasize and drive forward interventions to reduce these figures.
- 15% of enquiries received were around domestic abuse. The Board would ensure a clear leadership and governance around this issue and would be working with schools and young people to engage early.

In answer to Members questions it was confirmed that:

- Officers had excellent links and operational networks with neighbouring Authorities.
- The Board received knowledge around domestic abuse from a variety of mechanisms and surveys and would continue to listen to young people, ensuring they felt safe to share information.
- York Council had a positive relationship with the Police and had detailed processes and policies in place for any child that went missing from their care setting.
- The Health Visitor service had and always would take a key role in early interventions.

Members thanked the Chair for his update and noted that the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system had been reduced by 50% and that the rate of teenage pregnancies had continued to reduce. They agreed that strong communications between all agencies was crucial to raise awareness and support the priority areas.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

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

31. Explore Libraries and Archives Mutual: Performance Update

Members considered a report that updated them on the performance of Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual Ltd (Explore) during the first 6 months of 2015/16.

The Chief Executive highlighted how Explore was delivering a comprehensive and efficient public library service and provided information on some of their core offers.

She confirmed:

- The summer reading challenge, Record Breakers, had been very successful with over 4000 children taking part.
- The next reading challenge, Blood Axe, would cover an historical theme and if completed each child would receive a free ticket to the Yorvik Viking Centre.
- A new manager for York Explore was now in position.
- Funding was available to secure a part time post to develop the housebound home library service.
- They had signed up for the national Children and Young People's Promise and would be working with children under 5 to improve their language skills.
- An observational survey completed on signage confirmed more signs were required in and around the library and the city centre
- Anti social behaviour in Library Square was still an issue and work continued with the Police and other agencies to resolve it.

The Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills offered to support the Chief Executive on the anti social behaviour issues.

In answer to Members questions it was confirmed:

- The toy library was now library based at Acomb Explore and officers would explore this model to ensure it reached families who would benefit from this service.
- The housebound home library service had flourished through referrals from families or friends, working with Be Independent and working with Adult Social Care.
- the Council and Explore were in a fixed contract and budget for 5 years.
- The Children's Librarian would explore more reading challenges for secondary school aged children.
- Acomb Explore visitor numbers had improved but the number of books issued had reduced, the Performance Manger would be investigating ways to improve this.
- Rowntree's Park cafe and library was continuing to grow.
- The library service would consider eradicating fines if a way to meet that income gap was established.
- All libraries were connected to superfast broadband.

- The Yortime website was under development and would be improved.
- Purchases of the York Card had not reduced.

Members thanked officers for their update.

Resolved: That the performance of Explore be commented on and noted.

Reason: To help monitor the service received under the contact.

32. School Improvement Update

Members considered a report that provided information about school performance in 2015 and information about the position of schools according to Ofsted judgements as of 9 October 2015. It also provided information about the development and implementation of the new arrangements to support school improvement from September 2015.

Officers gave an update and Members noted that:

- Improvements had been made across all Key Stages (KS) and results were tracking above the national average in early years foundation stage.
- Throughout 2013-15 a consistent narrowing of the gap was achieved for the pupil premium cohort across all KS.
- KS1 improvements had been made against key national performance indicators in terms of phonics.
- Interventions were taking place to improve writing across all primary years.
- Improvements were made, against a more challenging set of indicators, at KS4 and our position regionally and against our statistical neighbours was maintained by sitting in 1st position.
- Ofsted judgements showed that all schools continued to perform very well against national and regional indicators, with 89% of York schools rated good or outstanding.
- The two teaching schools alliances, Ebor and Pathfinder were working with schools to sustain school led improvements and share best practice across the city.

In answer to Members questions officers confirmed:

- The performance indicators in KS4 were harder to achieve due to a move from modular to linear examinations and the changes made to BTEC results.

- The School Improvement Monitoring Group was still in existence and meeting dates would be agreed shortly.
- Funding required to support school improvements came direct from the schools grant.
- Funding was available to support schools causing concerns and the school improvement commissioning fund was reinvested back into the school system.
- Primary school buildings were assessed on a yearly basis.
- There were 6 geographical clusters in York who met regularly and as part of the city's narrowing the gap strategy each cluster had been asked to identify a lead school to be involved in a national research project.
- They would issue a briefing note that highlighted the areas of work the national teaching schools, Ebor and Pathfinder managed.¹

The Chaired thanked officers for their update and for the improvements made.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the committee on school performance in 2014/15 and the new arrangements to support school improvement.

Action Required

<1> Email a briefing note to Members MS
highlighting the work of the teaching school alliances

33. City Walls Scrutiny Review Feasibility Report

Members considered a feasibility report on a scrutiny topic proposal that suggested a programme of work that would enable a detailed scrutiny review of York City Walls in terms of conservation policy, interpretation facilities, ownership/management structure and staffing. It described briefly the technical work required; outlined timescales for this work and set out the staffing and financial resources that would be required to carry out the review.

Officers highlighted the importance of the City Walls and the identity they created for the City. They discussed the critical points and felt the current York City Walls Conservation Plan and Interpretation and Access Plan would provide a structured way of working if they were updated to include:

- A review of CYC conservation policy
- A review of management and ownership options

- Staffing requirements in both professional and craft areas of expertise
- How to address future programmes of repair and restoration enhancing interpretation facilities
- Future funding options

Officers highlighted the costs involved to update the Conservation Plan and Interpretation Plan. They also confirmed that work was underway on a Capital Resource Allocation Model Bid for the 2016/17 City of York Capital Programme which could be revised to include an amount for funding stages 1 and 2 of the proposed scrutiny review i.e. the development of a brief and the development of an updated Conservation Plan & Interpretation Plan. It was confirmed that this bid was due to be submitted towards the end of this municipal year.

Following a detailed discussion covering budgets, areas of best practice and external funding, Members noted that their were insufficient resources to carry out the review at this time and agreed that without the necessary funding the work required to update the plans could not proceed. The Committee therefore agreed to await the results of the capital bid before deciding how best to proceed.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.
(ii) That an update be provided at the appropriate time.

Reason: To progress the work of the Committee.

34. Learning & Culture Policy & Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2015/16

Members considered the Committee's work plan for the 2015/16 municipal year.

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed she was still in the process of obtaining information to support the proposed scrutiny review on elements of the Tour de France.

Members were asked to submit any topics they would like to have considered for possible scrutiny review.

Resolved: That the workplan be noted.

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

Cllr Taylor, Chair
[The meeting started at 5.35 pm and finished at 7.50 pm].