

MEETING	LEARNING & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	12 JUNE 2013
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS REID (CHAIR), FITZPATRICK (VICE-CHAIR), BROOKS, D'AGORNE, POTTER, SCOTT AND HODGSON (AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR CLLR BARNES)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR BARNES, MRS R BARBER AND MR A PENNINGTON

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 pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda.

Councillor Taylor declared a personal interest during discussion of agenda item 5 (York Museums Trust – Bi-annual update) as an employee of City Screen due to references being made to creative programmes.

Councillor Hodgson declared a personal interest during discussion of agenda item 5 (York Museums Trust) as an employee of (Ministry of Defence) Defence Business Services National Security Vetting due to discussion regarding the security of the area behind the Art Gallery.

2. **MINUTES**

That the minutes of the meetings of the Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 March and 1 May be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record.

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 - VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Members considered a report from York Museum's Trust on volunteer training presented by YMT's Director of Knowledge and Learning. He explained how the volunteer programme had developed since its launch in 2006 and that, in response to the growing demand for volunteer roles and the increasing capacity to accommodate new projects, the Volunteers Manager's post had become full time and a Volunteers Coordinator post had also been created.

He drew Members attention to the information included in the report on the vision for volunteering, the objectives of the volunteers programme as well as how the training programme for volunteers was structured.

Members were advised that a volunteer handbook was being compiled and Members asked to see a copy of this when it was ready.

Members asked if there was a procedure in place for when staff leave the museum. Officers confirmed that all staff have a leaving interview and complete a leaving form in order that as much information as possible is gained in respect of their experiences working at the museum.

Members questioned why there were so many "inactive volunteers" and what the retention rate for volunteers was. Officers advised that the 700 inactive volunteers referred to in the report included all those who had volunteered for YMT in the last six years, including those who had volunteered on one off projects and a large number of young people including students, who may volunteer for a couple of years while they are living in the city.

Members thanked YMT for the report and confirmed they would like to receive an update in the future which included information on how volunteers were recruited, whether any filters were applied and the retention rate for volunteers.

- RESOLVED: (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That an update be presented to the committee as part of YMT's next bi-annual update report scheduled for a meeting on 20 November 2013 ¹

REASON In order that the Committee is kept updated on YMT's volunteer training programme.

Action Required

1. Head of Culture, Tourism and City Centre to liaise with YMT regarding update to Committee GC

5. YORK MUSEUMS TRUST - BI-ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT.

Members considered a report which updated them on the current progress of the York Museums Trust (YMT) towards meeting the targets agreed in the partnership delivery plan running until 31 March 2013.

The report set out the ways in which YMT had addressed the key issues (stabilising visitor figures, delivering new income streams, creating new exhibitions and interpretative services, creating an education strategy, increasing use and involvement by residents, achieving high visitor satisfaction and cataloguing the collection) between October 2012 and April 2013 and gave an outline of what would be developed moving forward.

The Chief Executive of the YMT was in attendance at the meeting in order to present the report and answer any questions from Members. She drew Members attention to the following issues:

- The biggest current project was the York Art Gallery Development Project – all collections and fittings had been removed from the building and building was now being checked for asbestos and potential structural issues before main building contract began in October. The glass ceiling had been cleared in the central part so the original space was now viewable.
- The Art Gallery was reopened to the public for one last time on Saturday 2 February for the display of the York

Bayers Tapestry and a small exhibition of contemporary quilts. Amongst other activities available on the day, visitors were encouraged to draw on the walls of the downstairs galleries. 3600 visitors attended the event.

- While the gallery is closed, some of the paintings have been sent on tour – in May the exhibition of some of the most famous paintings, Masterstrokes opened at The Collection in Lincoln. It was considered beneficial to keep the collections in the public eye and to be able to see how other museums exhibit them.
- Work continued on the other major development at York Castle Museum. New exhibition spaces were being created – the first exhibition to be held in these new spaces was on World War 1 – this was Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) and the final submission for round two funding had been sent to HLF of which the outcome would be known by the end of June 2013.
- During closure of the Art Gallery, York St Mary's had become an art gallery, concentrating on contemporary work.

Members were invited to visit the Art Gallery to see the space before building work commenced and it was suggested that this visit take place within the next 2-3 weeks.¹

With regard to visits from schools, Members asked how many schools had visited the Castle Museum and Yorkshire Museum.² YMT representatives agreed to provide that information to Members. Members suggested that by offering a taster session at a school, it may encourage the school to organise a visit to one of the museums.

Members discussed the space behind the Art Gallery. They were advised that in order to populate Exhibition Square as a civilised place, the intention was to have a cafe at the front of the Art Gallery, although seasonal catering could be possible at the back too. The Head of Culture, Tourism and City Centre stated that it was hoped that an artist's garden/sculpture garden behind the gallery could be created which would relate specifically to the Art Gallery, and that they had talked to the Henry Moore Museum and York Sculpture Park about options for this area.

RESOLVED: That the update on the performance of the York Museum's Trust be noted.

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

Action Required

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| 1. Scrutiny Officer to liaise with YMT to organise visit | MC |
| 2. Head of Culture, Tourism and City Centre to provide figures to Members on number of visits by schools to Yorkshire Museum and Castle Museum | GC |

6. YORK MUSEUMS TRUST - NEW PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY PLAN.

Members received a report which updated them on the new partnership delivery plan agreed by the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Tourism. The Partnership Delivery Plan, a joint agreement between the Council and the York Museums Trust, was an annex to the funding agreement agreed through the budget process and covered the period from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2018.

Members acknowledged that the work of the York Museums Trust had moved on from when the previous Partnership Delivery Plan had come into effect five years ago and during this time the priorities for the city had changed. Members were advised that the new delivery plan looked at how YMT would operate until 2018 and had been agreed by the Cabinet Member in March this year.

Members made the following comments:

- Covering Report – para 5– add to list of information to be included in the twice yearly update report to the committee the following:
 - Add to VIII the “names of the schools which have used the Trust's services”
 - Add the number of people taking up lifelong learning opportunities (broken down by theme/type)
- Partnership Delivery Plan - Para 57 – third bullet point should state that YMT will submit a performance report to the Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny

Committee (instead of the Cabinet Member) in May and October each year.

- Partnership Delivery Plan - Para 58, 11) – this currently refers to Ward Committees and needs to be amended.

In response to a question regarding YMTs intention to increase their work internationally (para 44 of Partnership Delivery Plan refers), one Member asked what was being done in relation to developing the use of languages in its premises. The Chief Executive advised that they were currently at the beginning of a journey which would see them develop partnerships to take collections and work into an international context but confirmed that at present there was no international policy in place. She acknowledged that languages were an important issue.

Members agreed that the use of technology to make collections accessible to speakers of other languages worked well where a collection was static but not so well for changing collections. The Chief Executive of YMT explained that their current limited use was due to lack of resources and available funding rather than due to a lack of ambition. However a policy decision had been taken that every project would have a digital aspect to it.

The Commercial Director advised Members that the aim was to get all the basic collection records online so people could interact with them, and to start to produce material for visitors to download onto their own devices before they visit the museums.

Members agreed that the Partnership Delivery Plan achieved its purpose but felt that it would benefit from having an aspirations page, which would set out those developments the Trust would like to see if funding was available.

Members noted that they did not necessarily expect visitors figures to continue rising year on year and accepted that there would be a saturation point past which it would not be realistic to expect figures to increase further.

Some Members raised concerns about the introduction of potential charges for some exhibitions and stated that it would be useful to look at what criteria would be applied if charging is introduced.

RESOLVED: That the new Partnership Delivery Plan be noted and Members comments on the

suggested reporting arrangements be taken into account.

REASON: To fulfil the Council's role under the Partnership Delivery Plan.

7. DRAFT WORKPLAN 2013-14 AND INTRODUCTORY BRIEFINGS ON PROPOSED SCRUTINY TOPICS FOR 2013/14.

Members considered the workplan for the 2013-14 municipal year and received introductory briefings on a number of topics which had been proposed for possible scrutiny review during 2013-14 and were asked for their views on the topics in advance of them being put forward at the Scrutiny Work Planning Event the following day.

Members considered a briefing paper on School Meals which provided them with information on contracts with school meal providers, school meal take up, numbers eligible for free school meals and take up of free school meals. Members agreed this was an important topic that would benefit from consideration by the committee.

The Committee received a briefing report from the Principal Advisor (14-19) on the impact of the removal of the EMA (Educational Maintenance Allowance) which had been proposed for review by Councillor Aspden. The Principal Advisor noted that while it was accepted that the introduction of EMA had had a positive impact on participation in post 16 education, it was clear that participation rates had continued to rise since the removal of the EMA. He drew Members attention to the information contained in the report on the 16-19 bursary fund, which replaced EMA, and advised them that although providers were pushing eligibility very hard, they were surprised at the current low take up. Having considered the briefing note, Members agreed to put the topic forward at the forthcoming scrutiny work planning event.

The Head of Culture, Tourism and City Centre presented a briefing report on "improving the quality of the heritage and arts offer in the city, which had been suggested at the last meeting as a possible topic for scrutiny. She advised Members that the Council's high ambitions for culture in the city would be

delivered in partnership with creative and cultural organisations across the city and that officers, together with Visit York, were in the process of fleshing out the new high level tourism strategy for the city, which included the creation of a cultural tourism programme. Working with partners, a steering group has already been established with the aim of submitting a funding application to Visit England/Arts Council England funding in July. Given that officers were already working actively with partners and a timetable was in place, Members agreed that any consideration of this topic be postponed to the second half of the municipal year when the outcome of the funding application would be known.

Members received a written briefing from the Council's Countryside Officer on biodiversity in planting and planting schemes in planning applications. Members noted that this may be a cross cutting topic which may need to go to Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee and agreed it should be put forward to the Scrutiny Work planning event.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the workplan for the 2013-14 municipal year be agreed.
 - (ii) That the following topics be put forward for consideration at the Scrutiny Work Planning Event on 13 June:
 - School Meals
 - Impact of the removal of the EMA (Educational Maintenance Allowance)
 - Improving the quality of the heritage and arts evening offer in the city
 - Bio-diversity in planting and planting schemes in planning application.

REASON: To keep the committee's workplan up to date in accordance with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

8. URGENT BUSINESS

It was acknowledged that some Members struggled to get to West Offices for a 5pm meeting due to work commitments, and Members agreed that future meetings should therefore commence at 5.30pm.

Councillor Taylor advised Members that the regional launch of the Love Architecture Festival 2013 would take place on 21 June and it was agreed that he would email the details to Members for their information.

Members questioned whether the Committee should provide a response to the threats regarding the future of National Railway Museum (NRM). The Assistant Director, Communities, Culture and Public Realm provided an update on the current situation and explained what was being done in response to this. Members acknowledged that if charges were introduced at the NRM, this could potentially have an effect on other York museums.

RESOLVED: That the discussion on the future of the NRM be noted.

REASON: In order that Members are kept updated on the current situation.

Councillor Reid, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 7.00 pm].

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