

Report of the Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Disabled Access to York's Heritage & Cultural Offer Scrutiny Review - Cover Report

Introduction

1. This cover report presents the final report from the Disabled Access to York's Heritage & Cultural Offer Scrutiny Review and asks Cabinet to approve the recommendations arising from the review.

Background to Review

2. In April 2014 at a meeting of the Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Members considered a number of ideas around possible topics for scrutiny review in the 2014-15 municipal year. Cllr Barnes suggested a possible topic on disabled access to York's heritage and cultural offer, and this together with a number of other suggestions were put forward for consideration at the annual scrutiny work planning event held in May 2014.
3. In June 2014 the Committee agreed to proceed with the review and set up a Task Group made up of the following Members to carry out the review on their behalf:

Cllr Julie Gunnell (Chair)
Cllr Jenny Brooks
Cllr Fiona Fitzpatrick
Cllr Neil Barnes (Co-optee)

Review Recommendations

4. In February 2015, the Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the Task Group's review findings as presented in the final report at Appendix 1 and agreed to make the following recommendations:

- i) Continue to commission the services of an organisation (such as DisabledGo) that assesses the accessibility of heritage and cultural facilities in York, beyond the lifetime of the current DisabledGo contract (which ends in 2016).
 - ii) Communicate comprehensively through DisabledGo, with all York venues included on the DisabledGo website the benefits of including a DisabledGo link on their own website – highlighting the benefits it could bring to the venue and its visitors/customers (see paragraphs 77 & 80 of Appendix 1).
 - iii) Introduce an annual event around York's disabled people past and present (see bullet point 7 in paragraph 55 and paragraph 75 of Appendix 1).
 - iv) Improve inter-departmental working e.g. between Reinvigorate York, Planning and Transport staff to raise and make consistent our approach to access, reminding all of the impact on the cultural/heritage offer of the barriers created by poor access to public transport and moving around the city centre (see paragraphs 71 of Appendix 1).
 - v) Liaise with bus providers on policy around access and remind them of the needs of York residents and visitors and the barriers poor access to public transport creates for disabled people trying to access York's heritage and cultural offer (see paragraphs 71 of Appendix 1).
 - vi) Introduce a downloadable mobile application free to the public – the application to contain a comprehensive guide to accessible facilities in York. One example is the 'AccessAble' app provided by DisabledGo (see paragraph 78 of Appendix 1).
 - vii) If such an application is adopted, a marketing campaign should be run advising residents and visitors of the availability of the application and its benefits.
5. Furthermore, the Task Group recommend that following the transfer of CYC's tourist activity to 'Make it York', that:

viii) 'Full access for all to the city and its attractions should be one of Make it York's key aspirations'.

6. Finally, the Task Group recommend that 'Make it York':

ix. Work with venues to assess their interest in accessing DisabledGo's best practice guides, with the intention of charging a fee covering the costs of those guides.

x. Promote and encourage York's live music venues to achieve the Live Music Industry's Charter of Best Practice (see paragraphs 44-45 & 70).

xi. Promote and encourage York's heritage and cultural venues to sign up to Visit England's National Code of Visitor Attractions and seek accreditation to Visit England's Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (see paragraphs 47-48 & 70 of Appendix 1).

xii. Assist in the sharing of good practice across York's network of heritage and cultural providers (see paragraphs 81-82 of Appendix 1), by:

- Ensuring any future membership scheme they introduce, includes Accessibility (as well as Health & Safety) as a requirement;
- Promoting the use of the link to the DisabledGo website to the providers it works with, as a minimal standard of access information and;
- Signposting the link on each venue's website in response to requests for access information from disabled visitors;
- Promoting the 'Safe Places' Scheme;
- Including a link to 'yourlocalcinema' when displaying details of cinemas in York

xiii. Create a best practice accessibility-related award at the annual Visit York Tourism Awards (see paragraph 74 of Appendix 1).

xiv. Create and deliver training opportunities for public transport staff and staff at heritage and cultural venues, shops, cafes, restaurants etc to promote good practice (see paragraph 71 of Appendix 1).

- xv. Liaise with those organisations that participate, to improve disabled access to future 'Residents Festival' events (see paragraph 72 of Appendix 1).

Council Plan 2011-15

7. The review of this scrutiny topic supports the Council's priority to protect vulnerable people.

Options

8. Having considered the final report at Appendix 1 and its associated annexes, Cabinet may choose to amend and/or approve, or reject the recommendations arising from the review as set out in paragraphs 5-7 above.

Implications & Risk Management

9. The implications and risks associated with the recommendations above are detailed in the review final report at Appendix 1.

Recommendations

10. Having considered the final report (at Appendix 1) and its annexes, the Cabinet is recommended to approve the recommendations shown in paragraphs 4-6 above.

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

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Report Approved

Date

18 March 2015

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes:

Appendix 1 – Disabled Access to York’s heritage & Cultural Offer Scrutiny Review Final Report