

Council 8 October, 2015

Report of the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Tourism

The Community Stadium Project:

Now that planning permission has been achieved work is underway to conclude the legal agreements across all aspects of the stadium development. Good progress is being made. This is a complex project involving a significant number of commercial agreements which must be put in place before construction can start. An update report was taken to the Executive in August.

Preparations are now complete at Bootham Crescent for the Knights to use this ground as their base during the build programme, and the team is already training at the York St John facilities.

A contract is being finalised for the demolition of the existing buildings, extension of the park and ride and advancement of detailed design, which is soon to be executed. The land appropriation has now been approved and all pre-demolition surveys are complete.

Due to the commercial nature of the project leveraging £5 of external funds for every £1 of CYC funds, the overall contract cannot be completed until the commercial terms are in place, which involves a large number of organisations.

The project is progressing well and remains on track with the timetable set at the August Executive.

Learning Services:

I have put in place a strengthened governance structure for York Learning Services. In agreeing a first annual plan for the service I have ensured that progress reports on the priorities set out in the plan will be made to Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee twice a year. To support this process the service will also make public its annual self-assessment through my decision session and will create a planning cycle that will include an opportunity for public comment on the development of the annual plan before it is finalised. These arrangements will strengthen the service's pursuit of its objectives under its key priority areas:

- Full time 16-18 programmes, including personalised learning programmes for some of the city's most vulnerable young people
- 16-18 and 19+ apprenticeships, supporting national priorities
- Developing and improving skills in English, maths and ICT
- Programmes designed to support and improve peoples mental health and well being
- Programmes to support people's personal development and leisure learning

Volunteering and Equalities:

A key priority in this area is working with the city's Fairness and Equalities Board to develop and launch a new equalities plan for the city. I am anxious that we have a plan that is relevant to everyone in the city and which is strongly shaped by the voices of our various communities. I will be looking for clear outcomes which challenge all organisations to get involved and to pledge improvements.

I intend to get some momentum behind the Council's involvement in volunteering, both in terms of staff as volunteers and as a source of volunteer placements. I have asked officers to bring forward a strategy that will give this agenda a much higher profile and boost the number of people getting involved.

Sport & Active Leisure:

Following years of planning and successful funding applications to Sport England, the Football Foundation and the Football Stadium Improvement Fund, work has now started on the demolition and rebuilding of the sports pavilion on the Little Knavesmire. Building work is scheduled to be completed in Spring 2016. The building will be used by Hamilton Panthers Football club, Knavesmire Harriers running club and community sports and leisure groups.

On September 13th the city held its third annual city *skyride* event in partnership with British Cycling and Sky. This year 8,000 people cycled round the route, which allowed cyclists access to the city centre on traffic free roads. This year the route was extended, to take in a short section of Bishopthorpe Rd and an extended section of the riverside, to accommodate the high number of people who attend York's event. Feedback from British Cycling, Sky and participants has been very positive and planning for the 2016 event will begin in November.

Since May the disability sports team have developed a wide range of disability sports opportunities including making all of the summer Health Walks fully accessible, training deaf runners as run leaders and running three accessible cycling sessions at the University bike track, which is now a regional Paralympic cycling centre.

The fourth Celebrating Ability Week will be from the 26th Oct to the 1st Nov and will see many of the inclusive sports clubs open their doors for the week. The Sport & Active Leisure team will also be running a specific sports day at Energise Sport Centre on Tuesday the 27th showcasing sports opportunities.

Swimming attendances in the last year have increased to 500,000 from 477,000 in 2013/14. This has gone against the national trend of decreasing participation in swimming. However total facility attendances of 865,000 shows a decrease of 40,000 on the 2013/14 figures.

York Museums Trust:

I brokered an agreement with York Museums Trust (YMT) following the impasse that had arisen over their plans to charge residents for entry to the museums and art gallery.

Their initial proposals were not acceptable and would potentially have excluded many vulnerable people from using the museums.

I took account of the views of Learning and Culture scrutiny committee as well as the resident groups that also held meetings and expressed concern about various aspects of the charges and their impact on York residents particularly young people and people from lower socio-economic groups. I raised further concerns about the ability of those on particular benefits, vulnerable and hard to reach groups to make use of the museums and gallery.

I facilitated a series of discussions between YMT, including members of the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee in order to seek to address the various issues. In these discussions YMT clarified their expectation that the Council's core funding will, in future, represent only around 4.5% YMT's turnover, a level that will provide for only one third of the £950k maintenance costs of the public spaces and 18 buildings, including two scheduled monuments, in YMT's care. In these circumstances, where YMT was already having to plan further cuts of £700k in staff and non-staff costs, it was clear that the introduction of charges for residents is vital to the future of the service.

Whilst this financial reality constrains the scope for changes to the charging proposals I was able to gain agreement from YMT to address the important issues raised through a new charging scheme with the following revised features:

- The YMT Card will cost just £10 for YorkCard holders (compared to £20 for a non-resident). Children up to 16 will be free
- Continued free access will be provided for York residents during the Residents' Festival and for other special occasions and events determined by YMT
- Those YorkCard holders who would have qualified for a discounted YMT card, i.e. 17-24 year olds and those on particular benefits, will now be entitled to a free YMT card. In return for this provision, the Council will reimburse YMT £5 for each free YMT card issued with a target of 4,000 cards p.a. (Customers who have already bought an Access Card will be reimbursed by YMT)

In addition, YMT also offered to make available free tickets to YMT's venues to vulnerable and hard to reach groups who would not otherwise make use of the museums and gallery. Examples of the groups include:

- People with mental health issues and their befrienders
- Young carers
- Residents of older person's homes and their carers

The Council will work with YMT to finalise the criteria for use and will direct YMT to key contacts. The aim will be to see as many as 20,000 new visits facilitated. For YMT this is part of its participation in the Arts Council's Creative Case, a new strategic approach to diversity and equality.

Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual:

I am working closely with Explore on a number of plans being developed for improved library facilities across the city. These include a potential Health and Wellbeing Hub at Huntington Library in partnership with the local GP surgery. The purpose of this would be:

- To provide access to services in local communities which are accessible, and flexible to people's needs.
- To offer universal Wellbeing conversations for people in the community

- To reduce loneliness and isolation through the development of a wider range of activities both in the buildings and in the local community.
- To ensure that individuals can remain active and retain their independence sometimes with community or volunteer support and live independently for as long as it is safe for them to do so.
- To ensure that vulnerable people and their families have access to the information and advice they need, when they need it.
- To enable services users to access specialist services more locally

Explore will shortly be conducting a joint public consultation in the area to identify local need.

I am pleased to note that Explore now has over 150 volunteers who are making a real difference to the quality of service offered.

Parks and Open Spaces:

Clarence Gardens has successfully retained its Green Flag Award. Managed in partnership with Clarence Gardens Bowling Association, it joins Rowntree Park, West Bank Park, Rawcliffe Country Park and Glen Gardens which have Green Flag status. The Award recognises the best parks and open spaces across the country and celebrates spaces which boasts the highest possible standards, are beautifully maintained and have excellent facilities.

The team continues to be involved with and support a wide range of community projects. Some highlights include:

- **Glen Gardens:** The new friends group ran a summer fair in June to celebrate the 100th year of the Gardens. They continue to lock and unlock the Gardens every day.
- **York Cares Challenge events:** 10 events have taken place this financial year including at Chapman's Pond, St George's Churchyard, and at Scarcroft Green. Activities include laying a footpath, painting railings, cutting back vegetation, etc. more are programmed in.
- **Employment Training opportunities:** 2 placements have been provided in this period: Pulse at Hull Road Park, Blueberry Academy at Glen Gardens.

- **West Bank Park:** The bowlers have taken now taken on the daily locking / unlocking of the toilets.
- **Green Works:** Work with our Youth justice team at West Bank Park coppicing trees weekly / fortnightly.
- **Training volunteers:** 21 gardeners and 29 litter pickers have been trained in this period.
- **Community Management of Sites:** 4 more sites are currently being tested for community management including: Rowntree Park tennis courts – seasonal trial with Rowntree Park Tennis Club, and Rowntree Park tennis pavilion where there is a proposal to extend the lease to Canoe Club.
- **Improvement Projects** include:
 - o Clarence Gardens play area - £35k refresh scheme funded by Section 106 will be on site in October in partnership Haxby Rd Primary School.
 - o Rawcliffe County Park Bike Track - phase 2 improvements are now finished and a phase 3 trail has been marked out.

I will be ensuring that residents are supported to have greater decision-making on parks and open spaces. The Pride in York Fund that we have established will help wards to create community projects. The transfer of our 3 Environment Officers to the Communities and Equalities Team will enable them to support wards more closely with community projects.