

York

Area Assessment (Summary version)

Dated 9 December 2009




oneplace

for an independent overview
of local public services

York at a glance

This independent assessment by six inspectorates sets out how well local public services are tackling the major issues in York. It says how well they are delivering better results for local people and how likely these are to improve in future. If, and only if, our assessment shows that the following special circumstances are met in relation to a major issue, we use flags to highlight our judgements. We use a green flag to highlight where others can learn from outstanding achievements or improvements or an innovation that has very promising prospects of success. We use a red flag to highlight where we have significant concerns about results and future prospects that are not being tackled adequately. This means that local partners need to do something more or different to improve these prospects.

Green flags - exceptional performance or innovation that others can learn from

 Green flag: Working together for disabled children

Red flags - significant concerns, action needed

No red flags have been identified for York

The local area

York has been a centre of government, religion, education, commerce, entertainment and transport for 2000 years. The City and its surrounding area include the historic walled city, the suburbs and a large area of countryside. Four million visitors each year bring wealth into the area as well as disruption and congestion.

The total population is 195,400, 4.9 per cent of which come from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. The proportion of people from BME communities doubled between 1991 and 2001 and is expected to grow further in the next few years.

York's population is growing and is projected to rise by 4.2 per cent between 2001 and 2011 and by a further 8.3 per cent up to 2021. The four institutions of further and higher education bring the total number of students in York to around 20,000 (or approximately one-tenth of the population). York's four million visitors each year boost the local economy but place significant demands on the transport system.

York's public services have agreed the following challenges that they need to

tackle:

The City of Culture

The Healthy City

The Inclusive City

The Learning City

The Safer City

The Sustainable City

The Thriving City

The next section tells you how York's public services are doing in each of their local priority areas.

How is York doing?

The City of Culture

Local partners want to inspire residents and visitors to free their creative talents and make York the most active city in the country. They plan to achieve this by providing high quality cultural and sporting activities for all. Public satisfaction with museums and art galleries and parks and open spaces is among the highest in the country.

Four million tourists visit the city each year, attracted by a number of the city's cultural attractions including York Minster, the National Railway Museum and the Yorvik Viking Centre. These facilities are well regarded by both visitors and residents of the city, and a City of Festivals programme provides year-round cultural activities for local people.

However, local people are less satisfied with the quality of local sports centres. York is home to a large variety of sporting organisations, with around 350 sports clubs based in local communities. Public sector partners are working with these sports clubs to provide activities for local people, particularly those in the poorer parts of the city, although there is a lack of public sports and recreation facilities to meet the needs of local people.

The Healthy City

Partners want York to be a place where residents enjoy long healthy and independent lives. The city's strategic partnership - Without Walls - plans to achieve this by supporting people to make healthy lifestyle choices. They also want to develop health and social care services quick to respond to those that need them.

York is a healthy city. Life expectancy is high and the number of early deaths from heart disease, strokes and cancer has reduced significantly in recent years. However, there are differences across the city with people in some

poorer parts of the city dying up to five years earlier than in more well-off areas.

Several other issues are becoming more significant. Adults are not as physically active as they should be and this is contributing to increasing obesity. Binge drinking is also increasing and has resulted in an increase in alcohol-related hospital admissions. The number of teenage pregnancies has increased. Drug misuse in York is above the national average and more needs to be done to tackle the problem.

The standard of general health care is good, although the quality of care for adults with mental health problems, whether in hospital or in their own homes, needs to be improved. Social care services perform well but there are plans to improve these further.

The Inclusive City

Local partners want York's citizens to feel included in the life of the area. They plan to achieve this by improving prospects for all, tackling poverty and exclusion and making services and facilities easy to access.

York's community is changing, with an increasing number of people from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds coming to live in the city. Although most local people think York is a pleasant place to live people from BME communities are much less positive about the city. Public sector partners are taking action to develop their understanding of the issues facing BME communities and have recognised that more needs to be done to meet the needs of this group of people.

The needs of other groups, such as older people, children and young people, and people with disabilities, are more likely to be met. And much work is going on to ensure people from the less well-off parts of the city are not disadvantaged. Public sector agencies are working together to help people from these neighbourhoods into employment and make sure they get the benefits they are entitled to.

York is an expensive place to live and home ownership is beyond the reach of many local people. Increasing the supply of affordable housing remains a major issue for public sector partners. Some progress has been made but, because of the current economic downturn, it is unlikely that targets for the next two years will be met. Homelessness in the area is higher than elsewhere, particularly for young people.

The Learning City

The city's strategic partnership - Without Walls - wants to make sure that local people have access to world class education and training facilities and provision. Partners want people to develop the skills and aspirations they need to play an active part in society and contribute to the life of the city.

York's children and young people can take advantage of good quality education in the city. Most of the city's schools perform well and the city's

universities and further education colleges have a good reputation.

Ofsted has rated the City Council's services for children and young people as performing excellently. A review in 2008 by the Audit Commission and Ofsted rated the city's arrangements for keeping the city's children safe as outstanding. Exam results for York's schools are consistently among the highest in the country.

But children from the poorer parts of the city do not do as well as other children, and this gap is wider than in many other parts of the country. This also applies to a small number of pupils from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds.

Fewer of York's young people from poorer backgrounds go on to higher education than in other parts of the country. However, most young people do go into education, employment or training when they leave school and opportunities for adult education are improving.

Skill levels in the city are high in comparison with local areas in Yorkshire and Humberside and among the highest nationally. But more needs to be done to enable all local people to gain the skills they need to take advantage of the new industries arriving in the city. Partners in the city know this and are working together to tackle the problem.

The Safer City

The Without Walls Partnership wants to make York a safer city with low crime rates and high public satisfaction with the city's safety record.

York is a safe place to live. Overall levels of crime have fallen consistently in recent years although the fear of crime, though reducing, remains an issue for local people. Youth offending rates are low when compared to other areas, although the number of young people who re-offend is relatively high.

Drug and alcohol misuse continues to be a significant contributory factor to crime in the city. One issue of particular concern in York is the level of cycle theft - particularly as the city is nationally recognised as a cycling city. There has been some success in improving road safety, particularly in more rural areas, which has resulted in a fewer road casualties.

The Sustainable City

York's partnership (the Without Walls Partnership) is aiming to reduce its impact on the environment while maintaining York's special qualities and enabling the city and its communities to grow and thrive.

Good work by local organisations is making York a greener more sustainable place to live, work and visit. Recycling rates have improved because of this strong partnership working and are now among the highest levels of performance nationally.

Investment in park and ride and developing cycling routes through the City is

reducing traffic and giving people healthier choices for travelling into the City. The City was recently awarded Cycling City Status in recognition of its progress.

There's a strong focus on reducing the CO2 people in York produce as they go about their lives. Partners are working well together to plan for the increasing risk of flooding that will go with climate change.

The Thriving City

Partners aim to support York's economy to make sure that employment rates remain high and that local people benefit from new job opportunities.

Despite job losses in recent years from the loss of traditional industries such as the railways and chocolate making, York's local economy remains strong. Levels of unemployment are below national and regional averages and weekly pay levels are high. The tourism industry remains buoyant despite the recent economic downturn and new jobs, many in science-related industries, are being created.

The main challenges facing the city are to help local people to weather the recession and to make sure that local people have the training and skills they need to get the newly created jobs. The number of people with formal qualifications is higher than many other cities nationally, but the challenge is to make sure those qualifications are relevant to the new jobs being created as the local economy changes. The need for new economic development in the city also has to be balanced against the need to preserve the historic nature of the city, which is one of the main attractions for tourists.

CAA looks at how well local public services, working together, are meeting the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of independent watchdogs about the performance of local public services, and how likely they are to meet local priorities. From 9 December you will find the results of Comprehensive Area Assessment on the Oneplace website - <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/>

Alternative formats - If you require a copy of PDF documents in this site in large print, in Braille, on tape, or in a language other than English, please call: 0844 798 7070

Audit Commission, 1st Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4HQ
Telephone: 0844 798 1212
Fax: 0844 798 2945
Textphone (minicom): 0844 798 2946
www.audit-commission.gov.uk



for an independent overview
of local public services