
MEETING	"CULTURAL QUARTER" AD HOC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	29 JANUARY 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS TAYLOR (CHAIR), CRISP, FUNNELL, GALVIN, HOGG AND SIR RON COOKE
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR HYMAN

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

Councillor Taylor declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 4 ("Cultural Quarter" – Interim Report) as an employee of City Screen in York.

Councillor Crisp declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 4 ("Cultural Quarter" – Interim Report) as a member of the Board of York Theatre Royal.

Councillor Hogg declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 4 ("Cultural Quarter" – Interim Report) as an employee of the National Railway Museum, a member of the York Museum Trust and a member of the Visit York Board.

Sir Ron Cooke declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 4 ("Cultural Quarter" – Interim Report) as a member of the National Railway Museum Advisory Board.

17. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Penelope Dawson-Brown spoke on behalf of Yorkshire Gardens Trust. She drew the Committee's attention to York's great gardening heritage and gave details of some of the renowned gardeners and botanists who had worked in the area. The Yorkshire Gardens Trust was involved in promoting, restoring and conserving the heritage of parks and gardens and also ran a schools' education programme.

The Museum Gardens provided an opportunity for York to have a botanical garden which could also reflect its great gardening heritage. The Yorkshire Gardens Trust would be willing to work with those involved in developing a "cultural quarter" and could form a committee to advise and assist in the development of the Museum Gardens. Possible funding streams to be

explored could include science institutions, carbon footprint funding from industry and Quaker charities.

Britain was a nation of gardeners and a horticultural and botanical centre of learning could have benefits to tourism as well as providing an opportunity for York to promote its gardening heritage.

Members of the committee welcomed the suggestions that had been put forward and saw the opportunity for the gardens to not only reflect the city's gardening heritage but also to play a part in future biotechnology and to contribute to York being a Science City. It was also recognised that many people in York did not have their own garden and that the Museum Gardens offered them the opportunity to have access to a garden.

Mrs Dawson-Brown was thanked for attendance at the meeting.

Findings:

- That the Committee recommended that the Museums Trust be encouraged to liaise with the Yorkshire Gardens Trust regarding the proposals put forward.

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the "Cultural Quarter" Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 December 2008 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

19. 'CULTURAL QUARTER' - INTERIM REPORT

Members considered the "Cultural Quarter" – Interim Report and discussed issues arising from the report.

(i) Further Evidence – Transportation and Access

Officers from Development and Transport – City Strategy had been invited to attend the meeting to give further information regarding York Northwest. They informed the Committee that, at this stage, it was not possible to give detailed information as a number of issues and options were still being considered. Consultants had been employed to look at access strategies and transport models and they were due to present their analysis in February.

Responding to questions from the Committee, Officers stated that no decisions had been taken regarding Leeman Road but that whatever decisions were made would take into account the priority for existing residents to have access to their properties.

Other fundamental principles that would be taken into account when decisions were made about access in the area included:

- Ensuring that if existing access routes continued to be used, these were improved and enhanced.
- Maintaining lines of connectivity when new accesses were put into place.
- Ensuring effective transport interchange arrangements.
- Seeking to prevent people using York Central as an access to the city or for car parking.

(ii) Draft Recommendations

Consideration was given to the suggested recommendations drafted by the Chair for possible inclusion in the final report.

It was agreed that it should be made clear in the final report that the recommendations were to be seen in the context of York being a “Cultural City” and its culture not being confined to any one area. The diagram put forward by Sir Ron Cooke (Annex 2 of the minutes of the meeting of 16 December 2008) illustrated this point.

The Committee saw the role of the City of York Council as providing leadership and encouragement and supporting organisations seeking to access funding by removing barriers to investment. This key role should be encompassed in the final recommendations.

It was also suggested that “cultural development area” would be a more appropriate term than “cultural quarter”. It was, however, acknowledged that “cultural quarter” was a nationally recognised term and may support organisations in accessing funding streams. It was also noted that the term “quarter” was already used within the city as reflected in the “Minister Quarter”.

The following draft recommendations were suggested for inclusion in the final report:

- That a Business Plan be drawn up for the area, combining the individual plans and ambitions of stakeholders in the area.
- That, with the backing of partner organisations including the Museum Trust, the National Railway Museum, the Theatre Royal, the Minster, ~~the University and the developer of St Leonard’s Place~~ *the University of York and Rushbond PLC*, the Chief Executive of the City of York Council open negotiations with Yorkshire Forward and other public bodies with regard to funding and engaging with the cultural masterplan for York.

[As amended at the Committee’s meeting held on 18 February 2009]

- That a wider strategy for “Quarters” (Cultural Development Areas) be pursued by [York@Large](#) to engage other cultural

attractions and leisure providers eg “Castle Quarter” and “The Minster Quarter”.

- That whilst it was acknowledged that, for the purposes of obtaining investment, it was necessary for there to be a designated border, the boundaries of this investment zone may not be the most appropriate boundaries of a “Quarter” and hence this should be revisited.
- That the name of this area should be revisited by [York@Large](#) as the evidence presented to the Committee indicated that the name had been seen as divisive and elitist. The Committee recommended that the name should be one with which the people of York would engage and could be based on an established historical or geographical name associated with the area.
- That the Head of Arts be requested to prepare a strategy for York to bid to be named as a City of Culture. (It was noted that there were proposals for Britain to put into place arrangements whereby it would designate a city of culture every two years. This would be in addition to the existing “European City of Culture” initiative).
- That, in respect of access:
 - (i) Issues relating to the area known as Marble Arch must be addressed both in respect of vehicle and pedestrian access.
 - (ii) That a pedestrian link be put in place across the river as part of the York Northwest development plans in order to realise the potential of this area.
- That a Design Masterplan for the public realm in the area be commissioned.
- That the report to secure the future of York City Archives be fully funded and implemented so that the Archives are presented as a key part of this cultural area.
- That the Yorkshire Museums Trust be requested to liaise with the Chair of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust to investigate the viability of permanent displays and temporary exhibitions to honour York’s horticultural, botanical and plant biotechnological achievements both past and present. It was further recommended that investigations take place into the possibility of funding such attractions by inviting donations such as carbon offsetting.

The Chair asked the Committee if they would wish a letter to be sent to the Head of Planning to state that the plans to introduce ticket

barriers at York Railway Station appeared to be at odds with the “Cultural Quarter” vision of improving accessibility in the city, and particularly the routes from the station and the National Railway Museum and the station to the city centre. Councillors Crisp, Funnell and Galvin declared that, as members of the Planning Committee, they could take no part in consideration of this matter. No discussion took place regarding the proposal in order to avoid comprising the eligibility of Members to take part in planning decisions regarding this issue. The Scrutiny Officer was asked to seek further guidance on the matter.

- RESOLVED: (i) That, as the Committee agreed that they had received sufficient evidence on which to make recommendations, the final draft report be presented to the Committee at their meeting on 18 February 2009.
- (ii) That the proposed suggestions, as outlined above, would form the basis of recommendations to be emailed to members of the committee for consideration prior to the next meeting. Suggested amendments would be incorporated into the final draft report¹.

REASON: To ensure the progression of this review and compliance with scrutiny procedures, protocols and work plans.

Action Required

To email draft recommendations to Committee Members for GR further consideration

Councillor Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 4.30 pm and finished at 6.10 pm].