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MEETING	LEARNING & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	26 JANUARY 2011
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS POTTER, LOOKER (CHAIR), BROOKS (VICE-CHAIR), ASPDEN, CRISP, TAYLOR AND WAUDBY
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS HOGG AND MR W SCHOFIELD (CO-OPTED STATUTORY MEMBER)

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## **26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

At this point in the meeting Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda or any other general interests they might have within the remit of the Committee, which were not already included on the list of standing declarations of interests, attached to the agenda.

Councillor Crisp asked that the list of standing declarations of interests be updated to show that she is no longer on the York Theatre Royal Board.

Councillor Potter declared a general personal interest as member of Bell Farm Adventure Playground.

## **27. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8 December 2010 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## **28. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

## **29. MEETING WITH THE NEW CHAIR OF YORK@LARGE**

Members welcomed the new Chair and Vice Chair of York @ Large to the meeting to discuss the ongoing work of York @ Large and how it works with the Council and other partners to deliver joint services.

The Chair of York @ Large gave a presentation updating Members on projects and events that York @ Large had been involved in recently. She explained that York @ Large had provided strategic support in the City of

York's bid to become a UNESCO World Heritage site as well as providing support for the UNESCO Creative City bid which was due to be submitted this summer. She drew Members attention to the benefits to the city by seeing York promoted at other locations outside the city, giving the production of the Railway Children at London's Waterloo Station and the Yorkshire exhibition at the British Museum in London as examples of this.

The Vice Chair of York @ Large advised Members that nationally, the creative industries, including the cultural industry, were amongst the biggest growth areas despite the recession and stressed that any city aiming to prosper as an economic city needed to be aware of this. He explained that locally, York @ Large had created a forum for all the cultural organisations to work together and it was this partnership which had supported the production of the Railway Children in York. He stressed that this would not have been possible if it had not been for the relationships which had built up over time within the partnership. He stated that, in the current difficult climate, people would increasingly need to work collaboratively and pool resources in order to achieve the best outcomes for the city.

With regard to Councillor representation on York @ Large, Members suggested that it would be beneficial to have a second Councillor representative on the group in order to provide more flexibility with regard to attending meetings and providing feedback to other Members. The Chair at York @ Large explained that their structure was currently being reviewed and that she would take this suggestion back to the Group for consideration.

RESOLVED: That the update on York @ Large be noted.

REASON: In order that Members are kept informed on work undertaken by the Council's strategic partners.

### **30. ATTENDANCE OF THE CHAIR OF SMC TO DISCUSS THE ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS IN OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

The Chair of the Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC) attended the meeting in order to hear Committee Members views on the effectiveness of scrutiny generally in York and specifically on the success of ongoing changes and improvements to current scrutiny practices. He explained that this would help inform SMC in its efforts to improve the experience of scrutiny at work in York.

Members presented the following views:

- If scrutiny is used correctly it can be a very powerful tool but it must have a purpose.
- Scrutiny provides the opportunity to look at subjects in some depth.
- Cross cutting scrutiny is better. Alignment to corporate strategy is important.
- Would like more involvement in pre-decision scrutiny

- Reviews should be short and interesting - topics should be meaningful and allow Members to get involved in different ways.
- It is easier for Members to focus their minds if the work is narrowly focused, like ad-hoc scrutiny committees.
- Area based scrutiny reviews can be powerful.
- Members of scrutiny committees should ensure that they take advantage of training opportunities offered to them.
- It is important to have a good chair to guide the committee through topics put forward.
- It is beneficial for the relevant Executive Member(s) to attend scrutiny meetings, at least on annual basis, so that the Committee is kept up to date with important issues under the Exec Member' remit.
- It is important that relationships with strategic partnerships, such as York @ Large, are maintained.
- Consideration should be given to whether scrutiny committees should receive monitoring reports on a regular basis or whether Members need only be advised where there are significant changes to note. Members acknowledged that some topics worthy of the Committee's involvement have come to light through receiving monitoring reports.
- It is important that reports are received by the committee at correct time so they do not become irrelevant and out of date.
- The scrutiny process can be sluggish – there should be less bureaucracy/ less paperwork
- Committees are large and therefore the process of allowing each member to have their say is lengthy and meetings can be long.
- In summary, meetings should be more frequent, committees should be smaller and work should be more focused.

The Chair of SMC agreed to pass on Members comments to the SMC and Members were advised that SMC would publish draft findings during the first half of February.

RESOLVED: (i) That the update provided by the Chair of SMC be noted.

(ii) That Members comments on scrutiny be passed on to SMC for their consideration.

REASON: In order that Scrutiny Members views are used inform SMC in its efforts to improve the experience of scrutiny at work in York.

### **31. UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM SCRUTINY REVIEWS CARRIED OUT BY EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Members received a report which provided them with an update on the implementation of recommendations made as a result of two scrutiny reviews, on School Governors and the Extended Schools Agenda, which were previously completed by the Education Scrutiny Committee.

The Assistant Director, Integrated Commissioning and the Head of Extended Services provided an update on the outstanding recommendations in relation to the review of the Extended Schools Agenda. Members noted that with regards to recommendation 3, much work had been done in relation to improving cluster arrangements and towards the establishment of extended services partnership co-ordinators however city of york had not been able to take this forward due to financial constraints. However they noted that good relationships had been built with extended schools, work had been carried out with a number of schools on an ad-hoc basis and in particular with schools in disadvantaged areas. Members were advised that the extended schools service had played a large part in the improvement in academic results for these schools.

The Director of Adults, Children and Education provided an update on the outstanding recommendations in relation to the review of School Governors and Members acknowledged that there was a continuing recruitment problem in this area but agreed that the recommendations should be signed off.

RESOLVED: (i) That, in relation to the School Governors review, all three outstanding recommendations be written off as fully implemented.

(ii) That, in relation to the Extended School Agenda review, all six outstanding recommendations be written off as fully implemented.

REASON; To raise awareness of those recommendations which have still to be implemented and those which can be signed off.

## **32. PRESENTATION ON LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

The Director of Adults, Children and Education and the Assistant Director, Children's Specialist Services provided a short presentation to Members to enable them to scrutinise the trends, patterns and performance of looked after children in York.

They advised Members that the number of looked after children in York had plateaued over the last 18 months following a sharp increase during the preceding four years. Members noted that other neighbouring authorities were now seeing the same increase that York witnessed earlier.

They explained that children were now staying longer in care rather than yo-yoing back into the community then back into care which is an improvement. They explained that an increased proportion of children were now placed with foster carers and that this was the preferred placement choice. They reported an increase in the number of foster carers with 113 foster parents now in the city with a further 7 currently receiving training and explained that this had enabled them to reduce the

number of foster parents with more than two foster children and provide children with a choice of placement best suited to their needs. Furthermore they noted that, over the last three to four years, they had seen an improvement in placement stability and better matching of needs for children.

They drew members attention to the Council Pledge for looked after children in York which had been drawn up by children on the 'Show Me Why I Matter' Panel and which had been approved by the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services and was now issued to all looked after children and young people in York.

Members acknowledged that there had been encouraging progress in relation to looked After children and the Chair thanked the Director of Adults, Children and Education and the Assistant Director, Children's Specialist Services for their presentation to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

REASON: In order that Members are kept informed of the Council's performance in relation to looked after children.

### **33. REPORT ON LEVELS OF ADULT PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Members received a report which updated them on current progress with performance relating to adult participation rates in sport and physical activity. The report outlined performance against LAA indicators and highlighted indicative progress measures.

The Head of Sport and Active Leisure explained the methods for collecting data for both indicator NI8 (the percentage of adults participating in 3 x 30 minutes of sport per week) which is collected through a national telephone survey carried out by MORI, and LI5 (the percentage of adults participating in 5 x 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week) which is collected through a citywide talkabout survey and updated members on performance for both indicators.

She drew Members attention to the results of the Active People 1 survey in 2006 which had shown a notable difference in participation rates between those in lower socio economic groups, those aged 55+ and those with a limiting disability against the average adult population in the city and explained how the gap in these groups of people had narrowed in subsequent years, particularly in relation to people with limiting disabilities. She explained that this had been achieved through focused work with target groups across the city and in particular providing increasing opportunities for people with limiting disabilities to participate in sporting activity.

She provided Members with examples of indicative measures of progress/ actions which had taken place in relation to increasing participation in sport

and physical activity in the city, including the “Just 30” campaign and answered specific questions raised by Members on these measures and around funding.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and progress on performance be acknowledged.

REASON: In order that Members can understand the challenges faced in ensuring a step change in residents lifestyles and prioritise the resources required to make these changes.

#### **34. YORK THEATRE ROYAL - SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT PERFORMANCE UPDATE REPORT**

Members received a report which informed them of the progress and performance of the York Theatre Royal during the previous six months, under the current Service Level Agreement (SLA) which runs to March 2012.

The Chief Executive of York Theatre Royal attended the meeting and she provided an update on the work which had taken place in relation to the refurbishment of the De Grey Rooms which the Theatre would move into by the end of March. She explained that part of the refurbishment included the restoration of the ballroom which would offer York a new venue for public dances and private events and which was a fabulous asset for the city. She explained that the next stage was to look at De Grey House, which the City of York Council was currently in the process of vacating, and to work alongside York Civic Trust to make the house work as a creative hub which would provide the opportunity to bring into the city a number of creative organisations who were currently operating outside the city.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive of York Theatre Royal for an interesting and very positive report.

RESOLVED: That the report and update on the refurbishment of the De Grey Rooms be noted.

REASON: To fulfil the Council’s role under the Service Agreement.

#### **35. LEARNING AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2010-11**

Members considered the Committee’s workplan for the remainder of the 2010-11 civic year.

Members noted that the Executive Member for Children and Young People’s Services and the Executive Member for Leisure, Culture and

Social Inclusion would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee on 9 March to provide an update on work within their remit.

It was also agreed that an update on the Youth Service would be presented to Members at the next meeting and an update on Public Art at the new Council Headquarters would be presented at a future meeting in the new municipal year.

RESOVLED: That the workplan be updated to reflect the changes above.

REASON: To progress the work of the Committee.

Councillor J Looker, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 7.20 pm].