

Meeting	Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date	19 March 2014
Present	Councillors Reid (Chair), Fitzpatrick (Vice-Chair), Barnes, Brooks, Taylor, Scott, Pennington (Co-opted Statutory Member), Looker and Burton (Substitute)
Apologies	Councillor Potter and Thomas (Co-opted Statutory Member)

40. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included in the register of interests, any prejudicial interests or disclosable interests which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda or any other general interests they might have within the remit of the committee other than those listed within the agenda.

Councillor Scott declared a personal non prejudicial interest in agenda item 9 (Improving Evening Culture Scrutiny Review – Draft Final Report) as his wife was a retailer in the city centre who may potentially benefit from the Committee’s proposed recommendations.

Councillor Taylor declared a personal non prejudicial interest in agenda item 9 (Improving Evening Culture Scrutiny Review – Draft Final Report) as the Committee’s recommended use of poster boards would bring a benefit to him in his employment with the City Screen.

41. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 January 2014 be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record.

42. Public Participation

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

43. Attendance of Cabinet Member for Education, Children & Young People's Services

The Cabinet Member for Education, Children & Young People's Services was in attendance at the meeting to provide a progress update on her priorities and challenges for the current municipal year and to discuss her priorities and challenges for 2014-15.

Members considered the written update provided by the Cabinet including her challenges and priorities for the forthcoming municipal year, which were:

- to end the complacency in schools and continually strive to be the best – through the introduction of a “York Challenge, aspire that by 2015, 90% of York primary schools be classed as good or outstanding.
- to “close the gap” and enable some of the deprived youngsters to make proper progress within their schools and achieve their potential. Involvement in the “Challenge Concept” and the Pathfinder project.
- to continue emphasis on Early Help and Early Intervention, encouraging and enabling families to give their children the very best start at the beginning of their lives.
- to recognise that contact with Children and Young People should be done in new and imaginative ways, which would mean new and exciting partnerships.
- to continue to find ways of listening to children and young people and make sure our policies are guided by these views
- to ensure communications with all children and their families are two way affairs - we listen, we do, and we tell you about it afterwards.
- Recognise importance of role played by Children’s centres - Parenting Track launched last year – Explore ways in which Children’s centres can become more widely used community hubs.
- Youth Services – working to blur the barriers between the play providers and the youth provision to build up networks of voluntary and community groups who are able to fill some of the gaps left by the more traditional youth services.

The Cabinet Member acknowledged the need to relook at ways in which services were delivered within budgets by sharing data and resources and remaining focussed. She noted the Committee’s offer to act as a “sounding board” to examine policies as they were framed but acknowledged the impact this would have on the committee’s already lengthy agendas.

Resolved: That the update from the Cabinet Member for Education, Children & Young People's Services be noted.

Reason: To ensure that Members are kept informed of work within the remit of the Committee.

44. Attendance of Chair of Learning City

The Chair of Learning City York attended the meeting and provided an update on the York Skills Strategy 2013-2016.

The Learning City Partnership Manager was in attendance and she introduced the Chair of Learning City York to the meeting who gave a presentation on the work of Learning City York. She provided the following information after which she responded to queries from Members of the Committee.

- Learning City York has been a Voluntary Partnership since 1998 – It has taken a lead role for Learning City theme of Without Walls Partnership (WOW) and City Strategy since 2004
- Its overall aim was “Cohere, co-ordinate and collaborate provision and services of local education and training providers and employment and funding agencies. To maximise the contribution of skills, education, training and lifelong learning to supporting personal fulfilment and well-being, promoting social mobility, building stronger communities and enabling sustainable economic growth.”
- The Board is chaired by Principal of York College and its membership includes the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Young People’s Services, Learning City York Partnership Manager, CYC AD for Education and Skills and other relevant CYC managers and officers, representatives from Higher York, Job Centre Plus, National Careers Service, NYBEP, Skills Funding Agency, University of York and York St John University, National Museums Trust and York Consortium.
- Its priorities are Sustainable economic growth (nurturing, attracting and retaining talent of all ages), Enterprise and an Enterprising Culture (stimulating start-ups and enterprising skills and ambitions), Employability and Economic Inclusion (with a focus on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable) and Personal, social and community development (growing a vibrant lifelong learning culture and maintaining a balance of formal and informal learning)
- Learning City York supports children and young people (including undergraduates / graduates), families and communities, employers, self-employed and working age adults (both those in and out of work)

The Chair provided some key statistics and facts and updated Members on the highlights for the partnership during 2013 which included the launch of the York Skills Strategy (2013-2016), the establishment of the York Community Learning Trust and York Apprenticeship Hub and Brokerage Service and the John Lewis recruitment drive

With regard to the York Skills Strategy (2013-16) she advised that the three priorities were skills for business growth, skills for employment and skills for the future workforce. She advised how these priorities could be achieved, how people could get involved and what the main risks for the Board would be during 2014.

Members expressed concerns over the reduction in number of adult education courses in the city. They acknowledged that funding was now focused on skills priorities (Maths, English and vocational skills) therefore unless other grants were available, payment for a lot of courses needed to come from the individual.

The Chair of Learning City noted Members concerns about promoting Entrepreneurship in Yorkshire and The Humber, and advised them that schools and colleges include entrepreneurship learning into the curriculum, but acknowledged that those not in education did not benefit from this. The Learning City Partnership Manager drew Members attention to the "York Means Business" website, a local one stop shop to signpost people to business opportunities in the city.

Members reminded the Chair of Learning City of the two of the recommendations which arose out of the Careers Scrutiny Review which had been carried out by the committee the previous year. These were to consider the timing of the taster sessions at York College, which the Committee felt was a year too late for students, and to increase the knowledge of apprenticeship opportunities in schools as it had been found that some students were unaware of them. Members also acknowledged the difficult relationship between provision of impartial careers guidance and schools sixth form provision and understood that if schools had a sixth form, this became a strong influencing factor.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

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

45. 2013/14 Third Quarter Finance Monitoring Report

Members received a report analysing the latest performance for 2013-14 and forecasting the outturn position by reference to the service plan and budgets for all of the relevant services falling under the responsibility of the Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills and the Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods.

The Head of Finance drew Members attention to the financial pressures of £623k reported by the Children's Services, Education and Skills Directorate stating this was an improvement of £335k compared to the £958k overspend reported at quarter 2 but warned them that a significant overspend was still expected at the end of the year.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the committee on the latest financial position for 2013-14.

46. 2013/14 Multi Agency Audit - Monitoring the Effectiveness of Arrangements for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children

Members received a report from the Independent Chair of the City of York Safeguarding Children Board and were updated on the outcome of the Section 11 Audit Regional Challenge Event.

The Committee welcomed the new Independent Chair of the City of York Safeguarding Children Board (CYSCB) and the CYSCB Manager to the meeting.

Members noted that findings from a recent annual S11 audit undertaken in Autumn 2013 across the key CYSCB agencies that were covered by the duty under the Children Act 2004 (S11) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. Members learnt that following on from the audit the CYSCB and a few of the agencies had taken part in a joint challenge/learning event with colleagues from the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board.

Members were advised that the recommendations contained in the covering report were for the Board and not the Committee. However officers advised that the Board welcomed the input of committee members and would provide an update later in the year.

The Independent Chair advised Members that they wanted to get a consistent level of involvement from all agencies but this would depend on both their role and opportunities for engagement. He advised the committee that they were seeking assurances from agencies to find out what they are doing to ensure and improve this.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To allow Members to be fully informed on key children's safeguarding issues in York and in particular the results of the Section 11 audit regional challenge event.

47. Draft Final Report for School Meals Scrutiny Review

Members considered the draft final report arising from the School Meals Scrutiny review together with some review conclusions and draft recommendations. The Committee were asked to agree the recommendations prior to the report being submitted to Cabinet.

Members were reminded that soon after starting the review, the Government had made its announcement that from September 2014 all Key Stage 1 (Infant) children would be entitled to free school meals. The Chair of the Task Group drew Members attention to the review conclusions (page 47) which found that the majority of schools wished to remain within a Local Authority contract. The Head of School Services advised that the local authority had been in negotiations with the contractor as the current contract was due to end in July 2015 with an option to extend the contract by two years. He advised he was confident that they would see a significant reduction in the school meal price.

The Chair explained that from the visits they had undertaken, it was clear that all schools visited had the capacity to provide the additional school meals from September 2014. The Head of School Services confirmed that there was sufficient space within all York schools and funding was being made available to the local authority to make changes to the kitchen areas of schools where necessary.

Members noted that the main barrier against take up of school meals was their price and that York had the most expensive meal price in Yorkshire and the Humber and this was a significant influence to parents on take up.

It was agreed that the list of school visits be amended before presentation of the final report as not all the planned visits had been undertaken.

The Committee thanked the task group and scrutiny officer for their hard work on the review.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That the draft review recommendations at paragraphs 68 & 69 of the report be endorsed.

Reason: To conclude the review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols, and to enable the review final report to be presented to Cabinet in early April 2014.

48. Draft Final Report for Night Time Economy Scrutiny Review

Members considered a report that presented the findings, conclusions and draft recommendations arising from the Improving Evening Culture Scrutiny Review, and asked the Committee to endorse the recommendations to enable the report to be presented to Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee (CSMC) in support of the corporate scrutiny review into York's night time economy.

Members were advised that the new marketing organisation (known currently as NewCo) was likely to take on a number of responsibilities covered by this review. However the way the recommendations were worded in the report would have given ownership of the recommendations to the new marketing company which was not considered correct. Therefore the Scrutiny Officer circulated an updated list of recommendations which provided better accountability for the review recommendations and an explanation of where responsibilities would sit.

Committee Members commended the Task Group and Scrutiny Officer for providing the report in such a short space of time and agreed that the new wording of the recommendations was an improvement.

Resolved:

(i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That the draft review conclusions at paragraph 66 of the report be endorsed.

(iii) That the draft review recommendations at paragraphs 69 -71 of the report be amended as follows and endorsed for inclusion in the final report to be presented to Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee.

69. *To encourage more visitors to visit the city, and more residents to participate, Cabinet to:*
- i. Encourage York's larger heritage and cultural venues to offer up their spaces for use by York's other smaller independent entertainment providers (and by those based elsewhere in the country), outside of their normal opening hours.*
 - ii. Recommend cultural organisations in the city run a cultural pilot in conjunction with the Coppergate retail pilot being recommended by others.*
 - iii. Extend the running times for Festivals and markets to cover the early evening lull up to 8pm, and encourage Buskers and street entertainers to perform throughout that extended period.*
 - iv. Investigate the use of the city centre's open spaces for open air performances during the early evening period.*
 - v. In an effort to breakdown barriers to families, particularly those resident, coming into the city during the early evening and continue the provision of a popular activity for young people, Cabinet to encourage relevant parties to support the revival of 'dry' discos for young teenagers, whilst recognising and addressing the reasons for their demise, in particular the issue of safety outside venues.*
69. *To encourage a more joined up collaborative approach to cultural provision in York,*
- vi. A sub-strategy for helping to develop smaller festivals and supporting independent promoters to assist them in progressing new ideas, including providing and/or signposting possible funding for promotion/marketing.*
 - vii. The resources for encouraging all heritage, cultural and creative providers to work collaboratively and share information.*
70. *To improve awareness of York's existing offer and any future offer:*

viii. A number of high quality managed poster boards be introduced and strategically and sensitively placed throughout the city centre, in line with planning and heritage guidance.

ix. A comprehensive listings service or publication be introduced.

71. The Task Group recognise that it may be possible to achieve draft Recommendations (i) – (iv), (vi) – (vii) & (ix) through the new city marketing organisation (NewCo) which is currently being developed to ensure a more collaborative approach to cultural provision in York. This would require the above strategies to be incorporated into NewCo’s draft specification which is due to be presented for Cabinet approval in May 2014. However as NewCo’s specification is not yet available, it is not possible at this stage to confirm whether this is the appropriate implementation route.

72. In regard to recommendation (viii), the Task Group acknowledge this may be achieved via Reinvalidate York, as part of its wayfinding strategy and as part of a collaborative effort to improve awareness. However they would like Cabinet to consider how best to progress this should Reinvalidate York choose not to take this forward.

Reason: To ensure compliance with scrutiny procedures and protocols, and enable the final report to be presented to Corporate & Scrutiny Management Committee in early April 2014 for their consideration, as part of the ongoing corporate scrutiny review of York’s Night Time Economy.

49. Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee Workplan for 2013/14

Consideration was given to the workplan for the remainder of the 2013-14 municipal year.

Members were reminded that the next meeting was the final meeting of the current municipal year and were asked to consider issues which they may wish to scrutinise during the forthcoming year.

Following on from the questioning of the Cabinet Member, the Director of Education, Skills and Children’s Services suggested that the committee may wish to look at the options available for delivering services differently

in the areas of Youth Services, Children's Centres and arrangements around schools which were all big areas of transformation.

Members also agreed the following areas of overview for inclusion in the workplan for the coming year:

- Narrowing the gap –focus on performance of primary schools, use of pupil premiums, children receiving FSM etc.
- Troubled families cohort – look at how best to target them.
- NewCo and how it relates to cultural offerings in the city
- Report on Ofsted inspection – early in the municipal year.

Examine relationship between work of this committee and Corporate Parenting Board (to avoid duplication of work by officers and members.)

A possible topic for the coming year was also suggested - Access to cultural events for disabled people. It was agreed that Members should email the Scrutiny Officer with further ideas for possible areas for scrutiny.

Resolved: (i) That the work plan be noted.

(ii) That the above suggestions be noted and further possible topic ideas be emailed to the Scrutiny Officer for consideration.

Reason: To keep the Committee's work plan updated.

Councillor A Reid, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.55 pm].