

Meeting	Learning & Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	27 January 2016
Present	Councillors Taylor (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Dew, Looker, Jackson, K Myers, Wells and Dr Dickinson (Co-opted Statutory Member)
In attendance	Councillor Warters

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#### **43. Declarations of Interest**

Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests not included on the register of interests, any prejudicial interests or disclosable pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. No interests were declared.

#### **44. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Learning and Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 November 2015 be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record.

#### **45. Public Participation**

Councillor Warters had registered to speak under public participation in relation to agenda item 5 (Report on two Petitions relating to the Relocation of the Carousel). It was agreed that he would address the committee during discussion of that agenda item.

#### **46. 2015/16 Second Quarter Finance and Performance Monitoring Report - Learning & Culture**

Members received a report which provided an analysis of the latest performance for 2015-16 and a forecast of the financial outturn position, by reference to the service plans and budgets, for all of the relevant services falling under the responsibility of

the Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods and the Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills.

Apologies were noted from the Strategy and Policy Group Manger and Finance Manager who had been unable to attend the meeting at short notice. The three assistant directors for Children's Specialist Services, Education & Skills and Communities Culture & Public Realm responded to and provided additional information on specific issues raised by Members during discussion of the report.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the committee on the latest financial and performance position for 2015-16.

#### **47. Report on Two Petitions Relating to Relocation of Carousel**

Members considered a report which presented information on two petitions received by the Council in regard to the relocation of the carousel as part of the Christmas 2015 attractions. These petitions had been previously presented to Corporate and Scrutiny Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee (CSMC) in November 2015 as part of their regular schedule of petitions and had been referred to this committee as the issues raised fell within the committee's remit. Members were asked to consider whether any further action was necessary in relation to the petitions.

Members noted that both petitions had been referred to Make it York who had taken the decision to relocate the carousel as part of a plan to improve the city's 2015 Christmas attractions. Make it York had expressed concerns that some of the phrasing of the petitions had been misleading and confirmed that there had been no plans to "ban" the carousel, but that the operator had been invited to use a pitch which he used frequently during the year.

Councillor Warters had registered to speak under public participation and addressed the committee. He stated that he wanted to ensure fairness and give committee members the opportunity to ask the carousel operators, who were in attendance, any questions which they felt relevant in the same way that they were invited to ask questions of the Director of Make it York. He expressed the view that, after 28 years of the

Christmas carousel operating in St Sampson's Square and over 3000 signatures requesting its retention in that location, the committee should request a full report to consider the reasons behind this change to York's Christmas offer. He stressed that any report and potential actions needed to be concluded in a timely manner to ensure that Christmas planning for 2016, both for Make it York and the carousel operators was not overly disrupted.

Make it York's Managing Director advised Members that they had been tasked with doing things differently and taking a fresh creative approach to how Christmas worked in York including enhancing the Christmas market and broadening the breadth of the Christmas offering. The decision to move the carousel to the Eye of York had been taken with the best intentions in mind and with the idea of spreading things out across the city to include Coppergate, Kings Square, the Eye of York, Judges lodgings, and the ice trail throughout the city, rather than limiting it to Parliament Street. He advised that feedback from traders, retailers and the public had been positive and that Make it York would review what had happened last year with view to making Christmas even better next year. He stated that they were also in discussions with York Museum Trust to extend their offer at the Eye of York, Coppergate and the Museum Gardens.

In deciding what action to take, Members felt that, while it was not their role to advise on what Make it York should do, it was important to ensure that an agreement was reached in time for next Christmas. The Managing Director of Make it York advised Members that he was happy to have an early meeting with the carousel operators with regard to next year's plans. Members agreed the need for continued dialogue with Make it York around a number of ways to make York a positive destination, including ensuring there were suitable children's events and entertainment so that the needs of families and children were met.

Resolved: (i) That receipt of the petitions and the actions detailed in the report and annex be noted.

(ii) That it was agreed that appropriate action had already been taken or was planned, therefore no further consideration of this particular issue by the scrutiny committee was necessary.

Reason: To ensure the Committee carries out scrutiny's requirements in relation to petitions.

**48. Make it York Update on St Nicholas Fayre & Future of Parliament St Fountain**

The Committee received an update from the Managing Director of Make it York on the St Nicholas Fayre and the future of the Parliament Street Fountain.

With regard to the St Nicholas Fayre, The Managing Director of Make it York reported that the feedback they had received had been largely positive with a number of people having said that it was the best Christmas in York for some time. Make it York had invested more money in Christmas than had previously been invested and the return had been good which was a positive thing because it could be invested back into other things. A series of meetings looking at ideas for 2016 had already taken place and their ambition, in terms of a continuous improvement objective, was to try and make it even better than 2015.

The Managing Director responded to specific queries raised by Members. With regard to the increasing the area of the St Nicholas Fayre, he acknowledged that it would take time to encourage people to go further afield and that improvements could be made to some of the areas on the edge such as the Judges Lodgings. He advised that there had been positive feedback in relation to the increased width of walkways between chalets, the passageway to the Shambles Market being left open and there being clear lines of sight to both the Shambles Market and also to Marks and Spencer which had been an issue the previous year. Members accepted that space in York was limited and Parliament Street itself was a difficult area due to the cycle racks, trees and the fountain, and as such did not provide a perfect canvas for a market.

With regard to the future of the Parliament Street fountain, the Director advised that if and when Make it York were asked to express a view, it would be that a redundant fountain served no purpose and did not help with what they were trying to achieve in Parliament Street. Therefore if there was a move to remove the fountain, Make it York would endorse that positively as it would provide more space and flexibility in the street. He advised that the alternative would be to have a really fantastic

fountain or fantastic piece of art in that space but acknowledged that would be expensive.

Members echoed his views and agreed that the fountain did not currently fulfil any other purpose than as a seat and was not very ornamental. It was suggested that in the interim, consideration could be given to its use as hording to advertise events.

Resolved: That the information provided by Make it York be noted.

Reason: To update scrutiny members on the future possibilities for Parliament Street.

#### **49. Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education Annual Report & Review of York Schools' Agreed Syllabus**

Members considered a report which provided information on the role of the Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE) and presented its 2014-15 Annual Report. The report also provided information about the review of the agreed syllabus for Religious Education which has to be followed by all maintained schools.

The Chair of SACRE and the City of York Council School Improvement Advisor supporting SACRE attended the meeting and provided information to members on the 2014-15 Annual report and review of the agreed syllabus for religious education. Members noted that although religious education was not part of the national curriculum, it must be taught in schools by law and they acknowledged that RE lessons were useful in promoting understanding between different faiths. They were advised that the syllabus had to be produced locally (known as the agreed syllabus) and York's agreed syllabus was currently being reviewed in partnership with North Yorkshire SACRE and the Diocese of York. Members acknowledged that guidance for acts of collective worship would also be examined, working with people from other local authorities.

The Chair thanked the Chair of SACRE and School Improvement Advisor for attending the meeting and invited them to attend a future meeting to provide a further update.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the committee on the work of SACRE and the outcomes in religious education in York's schools, in line with the statutory requirement to report annually to elected members.

#### **50. School Improvement Update: Key Stage 4 Results 2015**

Members received a report which provided further information about secondary school performance at the end of Key Stage 4 (KS4) in 2015 together with an update to the school performance report presented to the scrutiny committee in October 2015.

Members were advised that York had continued to perform well at end of KS4 and that KS4 attainment remained well above national and regional averages. They noted that last year York had moved into family of better performing statistical neighbours and, even with a relatively small number of secondary schools, York had been able to maintain high headline figures. For the first time this year Maths had outperformed English in terms of the percentage of pupils making expected progress from KS2. Although improvement in English was still above the regional average, changes to exam specifications and methods of assessment in English had impacted on these results.

Officers advised that 2015 had seen a narrowing of the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. This has been helped by a focus put on schools by the recent narrowing the gap scrutiny review carried out by this committee with schools benefitting from having additional oversight. Much work had been done to ensure sharing of good practice across schools in the city.

The chair noted that the good results were due to the combined efforts of officers, school staff and pupils and stressed the need to keep the focus on narrowing the gap so further improvements could be made in this area.

Resolved: That the KS4 results for 2015 and the reduction in the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers be noted.

Reason: To update the committee on secondary school performance in 2014-15.

## 51. Bi-annual Progress Report on Safeguarding & Looked After Children

Members received a report which updated them on key local and national safeguarding developments since July 2015.

The Assistant Director, Children's Specialist Services, drew Members attention to the following issues covered in the report and provided further information in relation to particular points which were raised.

- Supervision Improvement Journey – October 2015 - This document reflected on work to improve delivery and effectiveness of supervision for frontline social care staff.
- Child in Need Service – Case file audits had identified strengths and areas for development feedback from families had been positive.
- Referral and Assessment (R&A) arrangements – Police colleagues were now embedded in the R&A Service.
- MOSAIC would replace RAISE (current Children's Social Care case management system) in March. This had been developed with practitioners and would enable a child's journey with the council to be recorded in one place in an instantly accessible way and would free up practitioners time so they could spend more time with families. Training would be provided.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks – staff were subject to checks every 3 years and the most recent audit had found no DBS checks were outstanding.
- Storyboards – high level storyboards present a suite of information to help professionals understand the strategic planning to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people.

Members also received an update on arrangements for looked after children. They were advised that a refreshed Looked after Children Strategy had been developed, in partnership with representatives from over 30 agencies/services and in direct consultation with looked after children, to further improve the outcomes for looked after children. The message being carried through into the new strategy was that "*good enough, is not good enough*" for looked after children and officers stressed that the council could do better and would do better. The report also informed members on developments around the Corporate

Parenting Board and about encouraging wider council engagement in the protection of children.

Resolved: (i) That the service developments at paragraphs 3-38 of the report be noted.

(ii) That the work described in the Looked After Children section at paragraph 39 of the report, to refresh the strategy and improved the outcomes for Looked After Children, be noted.

(iii) That the details of the wider council engagement in the children's safeguarding agenda detailed at paragraph 48 of the report be noted.

Reason: To fulfil this committee's commitment to receive six-monthly updates on key children's safeguarding issues.

## **52. Learning & Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2015/16**

Members considered the committee's work plan for the remainder of the 2015-16 municipal year.

The Scrutiny Officer advised Members that she was awaiting confirmation as to whether the Chair of Learning City York would be able to attend the 21 March meeting.

The Scrutiny Officer advised Members that the committee was due to receive further updates on outstanding recommendations from four previously completed scrutiny reviews. These were the Disabled Access scrutiny review and Entrepreneurship in York Schools scrutiny review which were completed in 2015, and the School Meals scrutiny review and Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) scrutiny review which were completed in 2014, from which some recommendations were yet to be signed off.

It was agreed that an implementation update on the approved recommendations from those reviews be arranged for the next meeting on 21 March. It was also noted that a representative from Be Independent had expressed an interest in speaking to members at the meeting when the update on the Disabled Access scrutiny review was due to be received.

Members were advised that work on the two current scrutiny reviews, York Museums Trust SLA scrutiny review and the Tour de France scrutiny review was ongoing.

Resolved: That the work plan be agreed subject to the amendments detailed above.

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

Cllr Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.50 pm].