

Meeting	Learning & Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	15 June 2016
Present	Councillors Craghill (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Dew, S Barnes, Brooks, Jackson and Wells
Apologies	Dr J Dickinson and Hagon
In Attendance	Cllr Ayre (agenda item 3 only)

1. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests or disclosable pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

2. Public Participation

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

3. Attendance of Executive Member for Culture, Leisure & Tourism - Priorities & Challenges for 2016/17

The Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Tourism provided a comprehensive update on work undertaken within his portfolio area during the past six months, some of which is detailed below, and information on his priorities and challenges for the 2016-17 municipal year:

- Sport and Active Leisure – York has the lowest rate of inactivity of any authority in the Yorkshire and Humberside region. In view of the new Sport England Strategy and investment plan, the team was working with partners to look at how best to attract some of this funding to York for ward schemes.

- Community Stadium Project - planning approval given for revised cinema element and project was continuing on schedule.
- Volunteering – Volunteering policy formally approved in November 2015. Volunteers Get Together event took place on 8 June which celebrated volunteer achievements in projects hosted by City of York Council. Important to have a coordinated approach to identify volunteer capacity and infrastructure, to ensure York could benefit from value and expertise provided by volunteers.
- Make it York – continued to develop the city’s events strategy – improvements were made to Illuminating York this year which received good reviews and discussions are under way with regard to future years. Looking to work more closely with Arts Council.
- Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual- a detailed report on performance had been provided at the last meeting. The number of borrowers has increased and two new libraries were planned for Tang Hall and the Community Stadium.
- York Learning – inspected in February under the new Ofsted Short Inspection regime and found to be good and their safeguarding arrangements were effective. The service continued to benefit from available funding.
- Parks and Open Spaces – Extra investment has allowed for coordination of volunteer effort which was crucial to the work within parks and open spaces.

The Executive Member responded to, and provided additional information in relation to, specific issues raised by Members. He confirmed that in terms of council priorities for the forthcoming year, one of his key priorities was ensuring that the Community Stadium was delivered on time and on budget. In terms of his broad portfolio, he advised that the challenges were many and varied and included ensuring continued strength within learning services, encouraging growth in library services, and pursuing more opportunities resulting from partnership working with York Museums Trust.

Resolved: That the update from the Executive Member be received and noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee is kept updated on the challenges and priorities within the Executive Member's Portfolio area.

4. York Museums Trust: Core Partnership Objectives Update - 2015/16 end of year report

Members considered a report which updated them on the current activities of the York Museums Trust (YMT) against the agreed core partnership objectives. The Chief Executive of YMT and YMT's Chief Operating Officer were in attendance at the meeting to present their report.

They advised that the reopening of the Art Gallery, on 1 August 2015 after a two year extension and refurbishment, had not gone as they had hoped due to the reaction to the introduction of charging for entry. However, the Art Gallery had a really positive year with 77,000 visitors since the gallery reopened. They advised they had received many awards and the gallery had been announced as one of only five finalists for the Art Fund Museum of the Year Award, and the only finalist in the north of England, which had brought with it a lot of publicity.

With regard to visitor numbers they acknowledged that it had been a difficult year due to introduction of charging at the Art Gallery and as a result of the flooding which had a big impact on YMT due to the perception that the city was not open for business. However the Residents Weekend had been very successful with a large number of York residents becoming YMT card holders. Members noted that those in receipt of income related benefit could get a YMT card free of charge and were advised that a YMT Residents Free Weekend would take place at the end of June.

They responded to questions raised in relation to specific issues and provided additional information where requested.

Resolved: That the report be noted and Members' comments on the activities of York Museums Trust be taken into account.

Reason: To fulfil the Council's role under the agreed partnership arrangements.

5. Learning and Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee Draft Workplan & Potential Scrutiny Topics for 2016/17

Members considered a draft workplan for the 2016-17 municipal year and discussed possible topics for scrutiny review.

Members suggested that it would be good for the committee to conduct a review on an education related topic, as this had not been done recently. It was also suggested that the committee look at the quality and range of apprenticeships across the city and outcomes for young people.

The Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills advised that the committee may be interested in receiving an introductory report on the following areas of work so they could determine whether they want to look at any topics in more detail or consider them for a scrutiny review:

- 30hrs early years funding for 3-4 year olds – York as pilot – report on take up/feedback from providers and Local Authority.
- Skills Strategy - update from Learning City Partnership Manager
- Local Area Teams (Children's Centres)
- Government White Paper on Education – look at how the city's schools are responding to that

It was agreed that Members would receive a series of background reports across a number of forthcoming meetings in relation to these topics.

With regard to the two proposed topics listed in the workplan, the Assistant Director, Communities, Culture and Public Realm advised Members that the Executive Member for Economic Development and Community Engagement (Deputy Leader) had considered a report on a Review of Play Policy, Playground Investment and Maintenance at his decision session on 24 May 2016, following its pre-decision consideration by this Committee. The Executive Member had approved the policy but there was an opportunity for scrutiny members to support the implementation of the policy through consultation with children and young people about the availability of play opportunities and the barriers to play. He advised that a scoping report could be made available for the next meeting.

Local Environment Projects was also suggested as a possible scrutiny topic and it was envisaged that this could enable members to look at the recruitment and management of volunteers to support appropriate ward based projects. There was general support for this topic.

With regard to the draft workplan for forthcoming meetings, members agreed the following amendments:

July Meeting

- Regular updates on Parks Development were no longer required and therefore it could be removed from the workplan for the July meeting.
- Scoping report on Play Opportunities
- Add introductory report on York trial of 30 Hours Free Childcare for Working Families, with a further update in 6 months.

Future meetings

- Prevention and Early Intervention Service – Local Area Teams (Children’s Centres) – committee to look at this after it has been through Executive
- Development of New Skills Strategy – Members to consider draft strategy when available – possible Sept or Nov meeting. This could include information in relation to the suggested topic on apprenticeships.
- Government White Paper on Education – Update and discussion of possible impact on schools future structural arrangements to be provided along with scheduled School improvement and Ofsted Update on Schools Performance report.

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

(ii) That Members would receive a series of background reports in relation to a number of topics in order that they can determine whether they want to look at any topics in more detail or consider them for a scrutiny review.

(iii) That a scoping report on the proposed scrutiny review topic on Opportunities for Play be provided at the next meeting in order that Members can decide whether to proceed with this review.

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

Councillor Craghill, Chair

[The meeting started at 6.15 pm and finished at 7.35 pm].