

Meeting	Learning & Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	25 November 2015
Present	Councillors Taylor (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Dew, Looker, Jackson, K Myers, Wells and Mr E Thomas (Co-opted Statutory Member)
Apologies	Dr J Dickinson (Co-opted Statutory Member)

35. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal 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.

Councillor K Myers declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 (York Museums Trust: Renewing the Legal Relationship with the Council) as he was a trustee of York Museums Trust.

36. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Learning and Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 October 2015 be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record.

37. Public Participation

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

38. York Learning - Strategic Plan Update & Progress

Members considered a report which presented performance data from York Learning set against the strategic plan for the academic year 2015-16. The report also presented some initial judgements as part of the service's self assessment process. Officers provided an overview of the service and set

out some of the opportunities and challenges that the service would face during the forthcoming year. Members considered a detailed action plan and an update on progress against actions during the year so far.

Members noted that the intention was for the committee to receive a report as part of a regular reporting cycle to secure appropriate governance arrangements by establishing robust and strategic governance processes. This could be achieved by engaging more robustly with members of the scrutiny committee and encouraging discussion and questioning from committee members. Members agreed to receive these reports on a six monthly basis at their November and March meetings.

Members commented on various aspects of the report and officers provided further information in relation to specific issues. Members requested further information on income streams (income and costs) and it was agreed that this could be provided to members outside the meeting.¹

Resolved: That the report be noted and members' comments on the performance of York Learning and on the emerging self assessment judgements be taken into account.

Reason: To help monitor the service and ensure robust governance arrangements.

Action Required

1.E-mail committee members with requested income information

AG

39. York Museums Trust: Renewing the Legal Relationship with the Council

Members considered a report which presented them with information on the Performance Delivery Plan (PDP) negotiated by the Council and York Museums Trust to run from 2013-18. The committee was asked to consider whether it wished to undertake a scrutiny review to assist in the establishment of a new legal framework for the relationship between City of York Council and York Museums Trust (YMT). Members were advised that this new agreement was required to reflect new funding levels, foster a strong relationship between the Council and YMT, facilitate investment and allow better protection of the museums assets.

The Assistant Director (Communities, Culture and Public Realm) and YMT's new Chief Executive, Reyahn King, addressed the committee. They acknowledged that the current complex structure, which was suitable when

it was established, was not necessarily the most appropriate now that City of York Council had become a minority funder. It was noted that the current agreements between the Trust and the Council may also be dissuading potential major donors from giving collections to York.

Members acknowledged that the current arrangements were no longer fit for purpose as they had been established based on a level of funding which was no longer available. They agreed that it was very important to review the various documents which made up the council's legal agreements with the YMT and that this was a very timely opportunity to do so.

It was agreed that a task group be set up to carry out the review and the task group would comprise Councillors Dew, Fenton and Looker. It was noted that the review would need to be completed by February/March 2016 in order that its recommendations could be considered by the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Tourism in April 2016.

Resolved: That the committee proceed with a scrutiny review to assist in the establishment of a new legal framework for the relationship between City of York Council and York Museums Trust (YMT), as set out in the report.

Reason: To ensure due consideration is given to how best the Council may support the Trust to ensure its long term sustainability, to maintain its relationship with other funders, notably the Arts Council, and to continue to make major capital investment in the museums.

40. Update on Implementation of 'Narrowing the Gap' Scrutiny Review Recommendations

Members considered a report which provided them with an update on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the previously completed "Narrowing the Gap" scrutiny review.

The Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills, passed on apologies from the Assistant Director of Education and Skills' who had not been able to attend the meeting due to illness. He updated members on the gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Members noted that while there had been some improvements, particularly in early years where the gap had narrowed consistently between 2013 and 2015, performance across key stages and between individual schools remained

inconsistent. It was noted that data was not yet available for 2015 for Key Stage 4.

Members considered the update on how the recommendations of the scrutiny review had been implemented and the key principles focused on in the Closing the Gap strategy. It was acknowledged that the recommendations had formed the basis of city wide strategy on closing the gap.

Officers reported that that the Council now had a better understanding of the cohort of children, their significant levels of need and the barriers to learning which they faced. Members were advised that the city had started to develop a virtual network to share best practice with work taking place in geographic school clusters. Paragraph 15 referred to Annex 1 which was omitted from the agenda in error. Officers agreed to provide this to members following the meeting.² Officers explained that developing an approach which looked to develop the teams around clusters to support the closing the gap strategy was crucial to developing sustainable city wide capacity to close the gap. Various pieces of work across the city were beginning to develop this approach, including the development of new children's centre offer at Haxby Road, and officers advised they would be happy to provide further information on this in future.

Members felt that while some of the scrutiny recommendations had been implemented, some had not been addressed in the report or required clarification. Officers advised that they would welcome the committee's involvement in scrutinising the closing the gap strategy and outstanding recommendations over several years and it was agreed that the committee would receive a further reports on closing the gap to keep them updated.

Resolved: That the committee continues to receive regular updates on the impact of actions being taken to close the gap.

Reason: Improving the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils remains a key priority for York. Receiving regular updates will support the committee in achieving its remit, in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

Action Required

2. E-mail copy of Annex 1 to committee members

JS

41. Chair's Comments

The Chair advised committee members that this meeting would be Mr Edwin Thomas's last meeting as his term of office as Co-opted Statutory Member (Parent Governor) on the committee was due to end on 31 December. He expressed the Committee's thanks to Mr Thomas for his contribution to the work of the committee during the past two years.

42. 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. They commented on the following items listed on the work plan for the meeting scheduled for 27 January 2016

- York Museums Trust – Partnership Delivery Plan Bi-annual update report: Members agreed that YMT would not be requested to present their half yearly update report as this meeting as the Committee had agreed to undertake a scrutiny review to assist in the establishment of a new legal framework on the relationship between City of York Council and York Museums Trust.
- Make it York Report on Future of Parliament Street Fountain: The Scrutiny Officer advised Members that officers had nothing further to report at the current time on this issue. Members however asked that Make it York attend the meeting and be asked to provide an update on the St Nicholas Fair.

Members noted that the update report from York Theatre Royal, which they were due to receive at their meeting on 21 March 2016, would be based completely on a period during which the theatre building had been closed to the public. It was agreed that the Scrutiny Officer would investigate whether it would still be beneficial to members to receive a report at that meeting or whether it would be better to defer it to a later meeting.

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

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

Councillor Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.30 pm].

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